

**MY WIFE.****BY AMANDA M. HALE.**

I WAS only a poor Bohemian when I first met Miss Castleton. I had been three years in the city, but had won neither fame nor wealth. I had a few pupils, whom I met at their residences. I had an attic, where there was a ridiculous old kettle of a piano, and a great quantity of musical lumber. Here I slept, entertained my friends and worked. Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Moscheles, were my masters, and the piano bore its share in many remarkable performances. I got my meals at a restaurant, or went without them, as it happened. I had rarely a dollar in my pocket that had not been appropriated in my imagination over and over again, before it came into my possession. But I owned a host of friends, genial, gay, gifted, all living the life I lived, all hoping, aspiring, waiting, working with cheerful patience. I might have lived on so many years longer, for it was not so bad

a life, after all, but in a fateful hour I met Miss Castleton.

It was through Carl Bittinger that it came about. Carl was a fair-haired German, reticent, speculative, and a genius. Separated from his violin, Carl was a waif—all afloat upon the great sea of sights and sounds called the world. The instrument was his other half—the completion of himself. I was the pianist at a certain rehearsal of a famous singer. A few personal friends of the artist were admitted by special favor, and after the performance was ended, these gathered in knots about the hall, or withdrew to the ante-rooms adjoining. I was left upon the stage, and I sat still at the piano, trying one chord after another, in a vagrant delicious mood—just the mood that the artist recognizes as his best and truest—the state out of which grows inspirations that future labor will develop

and endow with form. Vague unrelated melodies were wandering through my brain, seeking expression by my fingers; but I was but a clumsy performer, and I was just uttering an exclamation of disgust at my own incapacity, when a footfall close by startled me.

I looked up. It was my blue-eyed German Carl, and near him a lady. If it had been his violin, Carl would have deported himself with ease and grace. As it was, there was a singular absence and embarrassment in his manner, and he looked over me at the bronze Beethoven, as he said:

"Stoddart, Miss Castleton does you the honor of wishing to make your acquaintance."

Now I knew Miss Castleton was an accomplished amateur, and by way of opening a conversation, I said I should hardly have exposed my deficiencies so readily, if I had known she was within hearing. Miss Castleton smiled, and her handsome gray eyes had a merry light in them, as she returned:

"You have been playing very badly indeed, if you'll pardon me for saying so. What is that thing you have been attempting?"

"It has no existence outside of my own brain," I replied, a good deal pliqued and mortified.

Miss Castleton drew off her gloves quietly, and placed herself at the instrument.

"Now if you will give me some idea of it, I think I can please you," she remarked, with the utmost nonchalance.

I repeated a line or two from my written score—it was a half-finished operetta that I had in hand—and her wonderful memory seized, and her facile fingers rendered the passage with an accurateness and expression that delighted me.

"Can you sing?" I cried, eagerly.

"A little," she said.

"Try this."

It was a short passage, and she looked up in my face in a moment. I imagine she saw my surprise and chagrin. She had murdered my pet solo.

"Well?" she said, inquiringly.

"Miss Castleton, you play magnificently, but your voice is harsh and untrained. You will only play to me in future."

A wave of color flashed over her face, and her fine eyes showed scorn and anger. But in a moment she controlled herself, smiled, and said:

"I think we shall get on excellently well now, Mr. Stoddart. Above all things, I adore frankness. Now I will recompense you."

She turned again to the piano, and for half an hour I revelled in what seemed almost fairy music. Miss Castleton had a wonderful delicacy united with a great power of touch, and Chopin's airy fantasies, and Mendelssohn's graceful combinations, were never more exquisitely rendered than by her. She rose at last, and looked up at me with a luminous face.

"You have given me a great treat," I said, with enthusiasm.

"I read as much in your face, Mr. Stoddart," she returned, smilingly, as she wrapped her cloak about her.

"Then you will not suspect me of flattery?" I answered.

"Ah no! Would you think it worth your while to flatter me?" And a weary proud look crossed her face.

"Why not? Are not women fond of praise?" I said, somewhat puzzled.

"I don't know. I care for appreciation. If you will come and see me, and bring your operetta, I should like to look it over with you."

"That would be delightful, and you are most kind," I said, stammeringly; "but—"

Could she know of my garret and my poverty?

"I know. You are poor," she interrupted. "Carl told me—it does not matter. Where is Carl?"

We both looked about for him, and behold he was hid away in an angle made by a turn of the balcony, drawing the bow across the strings of his beloved violin, with a face of peaceful ecstasy.

"Carl!" I went up to him. "Miss Castleton waits for you to take her to the carriage."

"It is a real Stradivarius!" said Carl, coming forward in a somnambulistic fashion.

"Come, Carl, wake up!"

"Yes. And do you know Paganini played it at his London concerts?"

I looked at Miss Castleton, and we both laughed.

"You must allow me to come also." And so I went out and stood on the pavement, while Carl, recalled to a confused sense of sublunary things, put her into the coupe.

"Remember, you are to come and see me," she said, leaning forward, and smiling, as the vehicle drove away.

"Come home with me, Carl!" And we went arm in arm. "Who is Miss Castleton?"

"The finest amateur performer in the country," said Carl, with a flash of enthusiasm.

"I should think I had found out as much as that," I returned, unaccountably vexed.

We had crossed the street, and were climbing the stairs that led to my lodging. Carl went foremost, strode across the room, aiming for a violin in the corner, which I kept for his especial delectation. But I anticipated him, rushed forward, and put it safe under lock and key in the closet.

"You must tell me all about Miss Castleton, before I let you play a note," I said, with severe resolution.

Despair roused Carl.

"Well, well! Where shall I begin? O, her name is Blanche, and she is beautiful and talented, as you can see; and she is rich, and—and my second cousin."

"Are you in love with her?"

Carl thought a moment before he replied.

"Should you think I am?"

"I should think not," I said, with some indignation, "if you are in any doubt about it." Carl was looking longingly at the closet-door. "She must be kind; she asked me—a poor Bohemian, you know—to come and see her—urged it with that graceful hospitality which her position gives her a right to use."

"Yes" said Carl, slowly. "She has wanted to know you for a good while—asked me to present you a year ago. She has a fancy for young geniuses, always detects prospective lions, and praises them, and they fall in love with her. They say she has a room where she keeps their scalps—"

"Tush! If the girl is a coquette, I won't go near her," I said, almost angrily.

"That would be your safest way," said Carl, with a hateful coolness.

I arose, and slowly unlocked the closet-door.

"Why didn't you present me before?" I asked, as I handed him the violin.

"I forgot it," Carl answered; and the next minute he had forgotten everything except the precious violin.

Do you think I was in a foolish state of exaltation, because a pretty woman had

been kind to me? I was only twenty-six, and knew women only in dreams. I determined I would not go to see Miss Castleton that night—I would not swell her triumphs; I had no mind to rush blindly into danger. Nevertheless, I was singularly anxious for the morning to appear, and went out at eight o'clock, though I knew it would not do to call before eleven. But then I had no intention of calling. I would only just go and see where she lived.

It was in Coningburg Square, and my impatience to get there was so great that I stepped into the horsecars, and thereby depleted my scanty stock of scrip, besides cheating myself of my usual constitutional. Coningburg Square was a little green shaded park, set round by rows of stately brown-stone houses. The park itself, with its parterres of bright flowers, its Faun and its Flora, and its picturesque fountain, was a charming bit of nature interpolated into the heart of the city. So near the great noisy thoroughfares, yet so remote; all around roared the great seething sea of human life, yet stopped on the shores of this quiet Eden; the birds flitted and sung, the fountain made music, the flowers blossomed, the wind rustled in the trees, but no jangling discordances marred this natural harmony. There one could dream and work, and live and die, and the great city never intrude upon the pleasant hours, or take note of one's absence, when the stillness here flowed into the eternal quiet of the hereafter.

These handsome palatial homes were in strange contrast with my garret—in stranger contrast still with certain squalid homes that I knew. Of course it would be absurd for me to call upon Miss Castleton. My visit to Coningburg Square had taught me so much, at least. I had better go back now to my work. I might have known better than to come. So I turned away, a little disheartened, a little bitter at the great inequalities of condition. But, as I did so, a window slid up, and, startled by the slight sound, I looked up involuntarily, and there, framed in by the elegant curtains that fell around her like the drapery in a picture, was Miss Castleton. I saw the red blood leap up to her cheeks, the flash of recognition and pleasure light up her fine eyes. Of course it would not do to go away without calling now; and in a moment I had rung the bell at number twenty-six.

I was scarcely left alone in the drawing-

room, before the rustle of silk in the passage betrayed that Miss Castleton was coming. In a moment a pretty white hand was laid in mine, and I found myself welcomed in very sweet cordial tones.

"You have not brought your operetta with you, Mr. Stoddart. How did you ever dare disobey me? But you shall come up stairs, and I shall make you atone for it."

And so, through long darkened halls, where the soft glow of pictures shone in the semi-darkness, over stairs that led up and up, past niches, where pallid statues leaned towards you with speaking faces, that seemed to animate the gloom, past a linnet, that, high in a gilded cage, against an arched window, sang of love and summer, and so to a large lofty room, where at first I could only distinguish the white glitter of the keys upon a grand piano that stood just within an arched alcove.

"Now, first, I shall play you into good humor. You are a little bit cross, aren't you?" said Miss Castleton, with a piquant expression that became her wonderfully; and then, without waiting for a reply sat down and played a brilliant fantasia. Afterward, we tried one or two duets, and then at Miss Castleton's command—it did not fall far short of that—I played the improvisation in what was, to me, a very poor unsatisfactory fashion. But when I struck the last notes, I looked up to see Miss Castleton standing near me, her face pale and rapt.

"O Mr. Stoddart," she breathed out, in a long satisfied sigh, "you are a genius."

I shook my head laughingly, deprecating such praise.

"Don't contradict me," said Miss Castleton, with charming imperiousness. "You will be a great man, and I shall be proud of having known you. Come, now, and see my pictures for your reward."

We went into another room—a boudoir of a gallery, the paintings all remarkable for their soft splendor of tone, some pretty good Titianesque effects, Venuses, rich in an opulence of color, Danaes drowned in golden light, everywhere a sensuous beauty that captivated the eye, nowhere the sentiment that interests the heart. And Miss Castleton stood among her pictures, as fair as they—the same perfection of art, the same richness and breadth of color. What was wanting? Was I hypercritical to miss anything, while she stood there talking in those smooth measured tones? Passing back through the

hall, I noticed a small door that seemed to lead outward to the balcony.

"Is that where you keep the scalps?" I said, playfully.

She blushed, and answered, laughing:

"Carl has been telling you stories of me. Don't believe him! Carl is a good boy, but his head is so far up in the clouds that he doesn't see what passes here distinctly. Look!" and flinging wide the door, a waft of perfume came out, and within was a maze of greenery and flowers. "So Carl told you I was a coquette?" she said, dreamily, as we sat down in the perfumed slumberous atmosphere of her parlor. "But what would you? I tire of art, and the people are so amusing!"

I gave her a sharp look. Was she amusing herself with me? She divined my thought instantly.

"You need not be alarmed, Mr. Stoddart. You shall have all the immunities of genius. Ah, you are too much in earnest. I should never dare to be anything but very good with you. But I like you to be in earnest. So few people are."

I glanced down from the window. A haggard laborer staggering under a burden, a thin-faced ragged girl, peering eagerly around the square for a bit of bread to keep her from starving, perhaps—these passed across the space between the vapory lace curtains.

"Yes, Miss Castleton, I am a good deal in earnest. It strikes me that life is rather a serious thing. When people know hunger, and cold, and loneliness, and want in a thousand forms, they are apt to look upon life as not quite a holiday. I am in earnest. I want to rise. I mean to be rich, some day, and then I mean to use my money as rich men ought."

"That is a very pretty dream," said Miss Castleton, softly. "But it vanishes like all dreams. Your proteges are ungrateful, and disgrace you; your pet poor family get drunk, and are sent to the station together. You endow an institution, and the managers quarrel about and absorb all the funds, and you get disgusted with benevolence and philanthropy, and begin to buy fine things for yourself, and indulge your own tastes and whims—which it would have been much better to do in the outset;" and she shrugged her shoulders prettily as she finished.

"Ease and self-indulgence! Is that your theory of life?"

"Precisely!"  
"A very selfish one—pardon me for saying so."

"O, I dare say. But why should we not be selfish? Life is short—let us enjoy it!"

"But the future!"

"O spare me! I am afraid of ghosts!" she said, gayly.

"At least, you have the merit of frankness, which is a very rare one, now-a-days," I remarked.

"Not more now-a-days than formerly. Men have been deceitful from the foundation of the world."

"And women?"

She put up her pretty hands.

"There speaks the cynic. We shall agree charmingly. And next time you come, be sure to bring your operetta."

I accepted this as my *conge*, and departed. But afterwards I went regularly to Coningburg Square. It was my first association with wealth and luxury, ordered by exquisite taste. I was dazzled and intoxicated. I began to think that they were essential to my happiness. Economy grew distasteful; my meagre garret became hateful.

The very air of Coningburg Square, its seclusion and elegant repose, the perfumed half-darkened house, the rich soft carpets, the pictures, the statuary, the beautiful woman who fitted into these surroundings so admirably, satisfied my artistic sense. And so my charmed feet tended thither always. Carl was there often; but Carl was her cousin, and neither of us minded him. We played, studied music, talked as unservedly as if he were not present. Meantime my talent grew; my public attempts were successful, and when my operetta was brought out, it was in a tempest of applause.

I went to Miss Castleton with the good news. It was bleak winter weather, and a slight illness had detained her at home. She was pale, and had an air of pensiveness about her that made her more charming than ever. She listened to me, while I poured out my sanguine hopes and plans.

"That is the way with you," she said. "You men care for nothing but fame. You leave us for it. We can do nothing but weep and wait at home."

A strange tingling fire thrilled me as she spoke.

"We men care for something else," I said, in a tone that was hoarse and strange to my own ears. "We care for love."

The tender eyes met mine. Her hand was half extended.

"If I were not so poor, Blanche—"

"But I am rich enough for us both," she cried, flushing and smiling.

I went home that night to my supper of bread and tea. I wanted to think it over, to understand it all. I, the poor Bohemian artist, the accepted lover of Miss Castleton!

In the course of the evening Carl sauntered in. Was it because I had been so engrossed with my beautiful love, that I had not noticed how haggard he was, from what dark hollows his luminous eyes shone? I spoke of him to Miss Castleton the next day.

"You should do something for him, dear."

"Why, Carl is not poor. He has a pretty fortune of his own."

"Not poor! But he lives like that."

"O, but Carl is not like you, you naughty Sybarite. He does not care for all the nice things that you delight in," she said, playfully.

"It is you who have spoiled me," I said, with some shame.

"And I mean to go on spoiling you."

I was doing a great deal of work just at this time, and to my own satisfaction. But this feeling, I found, to my surprise, was not shared by my artist friends. I arranged a cantata, and they cried out that it was flimsy and meretricious. Want of strength, of power, of earnestness, of everything upon which I had prided myself, was detected. I was angry at my critics, and mortified and discouraged at myself. In this mood, an invitation to conduct a musical convention in the country was a godsend. I bade Miss Castleton good-by, and went.

It was a little mountain town, far in the heart of the country. On ordinary days, the white roads that wound over the hills and through the woods were lonesome and still, but now a long line of vehicles came up and up from the remote towns, and the little quiet village was full of unwonted sounds. The organ in the church squeaked out doleful discords under the hands of amateur players, and from every neat farmhouse came forth the trills and quavers of early and late practising. There were some artistic deficiencies, but they took hold of the work with an enthusiasm that surprised and delighted me. There was something wholesome and refreshing in these simple country folk; when I met them to practise,

I welcomed at once the round, fresh, unaffected voices, and rejoiced at the absence of ridiculous crescendos and trills.

A sweet pure soprano, that came in like a bird's song, caught my ear at once, and I looked around to see a small shy girl, whose eyes fell timidly under mine.

"Who is it?"

"Margaret Alison" was the answer, with evident pride; and I soon made out that Margaret Alison was the pet singer of the country, and the pride was surely justifiable.

Afterward, if I missed her voice, the rehearsal became dull. Yet I had never spoken to her—hardly even caught a glance from the shy sweet eyes. And so it went on, until the day before the last public performance. I went early to the church, and there was Margaret, with some companions, at the organ.

The young girls stole away soon—they were shy of the director, and wanted to chat *without restraint*—but when Margaret would have followed, I detained her, made her sing to me, and afterwards adroitly wooed her to talk, and gave her some instruction that she needed. Sitting there in the twilight of the old church, she looked like one of Domenichino's saints, her white hands dreamily folded, her eyes half-bashfully lifted to mine, eager to learn what I taught. I rose and stepped back, the better to illustrate some technical point. The loft had been floored over to the outside balustrade, and I heedlessly stepped clear to the edge. The next instant a sharp pained cry warned me, but too late. I went down to the floor below, falling heavily, and getting mercilessly bruised. But I retained my consciousness. I heard swift feet flying over the stairs, and in a moment my head was raised, and Margaret's eyes, full of terror and pity, looked down at me.

"O, it is all my fault!" she sobbed out. "Do you think you are much hurt?"

I tried to falter out a reply, but a sickening faintness came over me. Ages upon ages seemed to lapse away, and nothing was clear to my consciousness. Sometimes there was a vision of an open window, where a white curtain fluttered in the wind, and beyond, a range of wooded hills, rolling fields and the clear blue sky above; sometimes I fancied I heard soft voices and light steps about me; a benign matronly lady looked at me with pity in her face, and anon a cloud of golden hair would dazzle

my tired eyes. At last, one day, this confused dream ended, and I woke sane and free from fever. But it was surely Margaret Alison who stood by, her violet eyes dewy and glad, a tremulous smile on her lips.

"What is it? Do tell me!" I said, vaguely wondering.

"You fell in the church, you know, and as our house was the nearest one, you were brought here."

I turned my eyes to the window. The white curtain waved gently, and beyond was the freshening country.

"Those are real trees?" I said, doubtfully.

"To be sure," laughed Margaret. "It is spring, you see—I found violets in blossom to-day. You have been ill three weeks."

"Three weeks! And the singers?"

"Are all gone home. They had to do without their director."

"And without their beloved soprano?" I said.

"Yes. It was my duty to look after you, because it was by my fault that you fell," she said, demurely.

"Well! we will finish that lesson some day. Have no letters come for me?"

"O yes; plenty of them."

I opened one that I knew was from Miss Castleton. "So sorry that I was hurt—supposed it was not serious—hoped I would get away from that barbarous place as soon as practicable. She would come to see me, only she could not possibly leave town just now." And then a long *melange* of personal and art-gossip, in which I was singularly uninterested.

Presently the matronly lady, who proved to be Margaret's mother, came in, and forbade either reading or talking. And so I lay in a pleasant quiescent state, for that and many following days, watching the ever-brightening spring, watching Margaret in her dress of violet, or azure, or gray. I used to try to imagine her among Miss Castleton's luxurious surroundings, but I could never fit her into the picture. A background of green fields and clear sky suited her best. Then, as I slowly grew better, we talked, and Margaret worked and sang, and I brought out my latest works, and laid them upon the old-fashioned piano, in the homely pleasant parlor, and condemned them one by one. How superficial, how affected, how weak they were! My illness

had swept the cobwebs clear from my brain. And all this time Miss Castleton's letters were unanswered. To reply to them, would be to put myself in connection with that old mode of life, which was become hateful to me. I tried to think I was too weak to go; but Margaret said one day, with an abruptness that was not ungraceful in her:

"Mr. Stoddart, have you no work to do in the world?"

"None that is worth doing," I said, surprised.

Her eyes kindled.

"You can say that! If I were an artist like you, I should not find life meagre. Mr. Stoddart, you should be ashamed to be so blasé."

"But, Margaret, you don't know how unsatisfactory I have found my success. My life has been wasted upon trivialities."

"Take it up anew, then. Make it worth living!"

"I cannot take it up anew," I said, bitterly; and I began to feel that I was bound, and that my bondage was irksome.

She turned, and her clear eyes seemed to search me.

"Margaret, Margaret!" I cried. "Do not blame me. Help me!"

She came round by my chair. The violet dress touched me. The pure atmosphere in which she lived encompassed me.

"How can I help you?" she said, very softly.

"I have made a great mistake, Margaret. What shall I do?"

"Just what is right, no matter at what cost," she said; but her voice went very low, and her cheek grew white with the words.

There was a long silence; then at last I said:

"Yes, Margaret, I will." And then, though I longed for it, I turned away from the divine pity in her eyes.

A step at the door, a rustle in the entry, and Miss Castleton entered, radiant and queenly.

"Blanche!"

"How do you do, Roger?"

And then she looked Margaret over, an inquisition that I attempted to end by presenting her. Margaret went out in a moment, and there was scorn and fire in Miss Castleton's handsome eyes, as she said:

"Do you mean to be a villain, Mr. Stoddart?"

"No, Miss Castleton!"

"I think, then, we had better return to Boston to-morrow."

"Very well!" I said. And so Miss Castleton trailed her rich dress over the ingrain carpets till the morning train left.

Margaret did not come down. Indeed, Miss Castleton's manner towards her was such that she could not have done so with dignity. And so, instead of a farewell, I had only a glimpse of a sunny head, and a pair of sad sweet reproachful eyes, that haunted me long.

I went round to Coningburg Square the day after my arrival in town. I was shown up into Miss Castleton's parlor, and I stood within the alcove, shaded by its curtain, looking over some new music that lay upon the piano. Presently I heard voices, and Miss Castleton came in. I thought at first that the person who attended her was come to take some order, but I was presently undeceived.

"This is most heartless conduct of yours," said Carl. "Why not confess that your liking for Stoddart was already waning, and was only resuscitated by what you heard of the little country girl?"

"Upon my word, Carl," returned Miss Castleton's musical voice, "your penetration is fearful! I am more than ever sure that we understand each other too well ever to get on together."

"And do you mean to break your promise to me, then?" said Carl, angrily.

"*Cela depend!*" And she hummed an air, that was quickly interrupted by a shriek.

She had caught sight of me. I stepped out from the shadow of the curtain, in time to see Miss Castleton grow suddenly white. The scene in the little country parlor flashed across my mind, and I was merciless.

"Miss Castleton, I assure you that I was an involuntary but most interested listener to the conversation that has just taken place. Considering our relation, you will, perhaps, allow me to ask the nature of your promise to Mr. Bittinger?"

She flushed crimson, glancing at Carl imploringly.

"Tell him!" said Carl.

Miss Castleton pulled at the tassel upon her breakfast-shawl, till the bit of bright wool dropped to the floor. Then she looked up, paling to the lips.

"I promised to marry him," she said, in a hard tone.

"How long ago was that?" I asked, amazed.

"Four years!"

"Four years," repeated Carl; "and I really think she cares more for me than for any of her other lovers;" and he looked at her with a curious disapproving tenderness of expression.

Miss Castleton was fingering the engagement ring I had given her. I saw a swift movement, and the next moment the glittering bauble fell at my feet, and Miss Cas-

tleton had left the room. I picked up the ring, and walked over to Carl.

"I wish you all happiness, Carl."

"You are very good. But whether I am happy or no, I cannot help myself. She crept into my heart years ago, when she was a little girl, and she will stay there till I die."

It is not long since that I met Mr. and Mrs. Bittinger at a *fete*, and I was thankful that the little golden-haired woman beside me was my wife, and not the stately lady who swept past us in her velvet robes.



## MY WIFE'S SILK DRESS.

BY N. P. DARLING.

WE'D only been married about six months, and the novelty hadn't begun to wear off. Fannie called me her "dear Charles," besides numberless pet names. It might have sounded rather foolish to old maids, bachelors and sober married folks, but to us, it was 'an altogether different thing. We loved each other then, as no words can express—my darling blue-eyed Fannie!

I was only twenty-two, and Fannie was just seventeen, so of course we had neither of us seen a great deal of the world; but I had never thought that Fannie could possibly love any one but her "dear Charles." Jealous of Fannie? bless me! But remember, my boy, it is just when one feels most secure in the love of a woman that she trips. Perhaps I should never have suspected anything, but for my particular friend Tibbs. He warned me first. You see Tibbs is a gentleman of leisure. He is employed sometimes by Street, Walker, Doolittle & Co., and it was while he was with that firm that I made his acquaintance.

The week before I was married, Tibbs was busy all the while making preparations. Tibbs selected half the furniture for the house. He put it in order. The piano should stand there, the lounge here, and the whatnot should be in this corner. This splendid landscape must hang here,

where the light was good, another painting in water-colors by my dear Fannie, should hang here, it would look *better* in the *shade*. Fannie couldn't exactly see that, but then as Mr. Tibbs was a particular friend of her dear Charles, she had all confidence in him.

Tibbs was groomsman, of course. He was the first person that kissed my wife, after the ceremony was performed. He took the first piece of our wedding-cake. He helped himself first at the marriage feast, and poor Mrs. Brown (my dear Fannie's mother), good old soul, being easily confounded and muddled in her ideas, became confused, and took Tibbs by the hand, and with great tears in her eyes begged him to be a good kind husband to her daughter; and Tibbs one of the most uncommencing men you ever saw, promised he would, and then my dear Fannie's mother gave him a great rousing kiss.

As the carriage came to the door, Tibbs stepped out and helped my wife in. I followed. "Good-by, Charlie, my boy," and Tibbs gave me his hand, though his eyes were fixed upon my wife. "Adieu, Fannie."

We were off upon our wedding tour a month. When we returned, Tibbs stood in the door of our new house to receive us. He kissed my wife again. Now Tibbs is a very particular friend of mine; but I don't

like to have a *particular* friend make a regular practice of kissing my dear Fannie. But nevertheless, I was very thankful to Tibbs for all his kindness to me.

After that he made a practice of coming to our house two or three evenings every week, and he always took his Sunday dinner with us, after service; and of course he knew quite as much about our household affairs as I did myself. He took quite as much interest in them, too.

But at last, when Fannie's birthday was approaching, I bethought me to make her some sort of a present. But what should I get her? That puzzled me. I was just passing Crumlet's, and through the blinds I saw Tibbs sitting in an easy-chair, with a paper in his hand, a cigar in his mouth, and his feet (Tibbs had small and handsome feet—wore fives) upon the table before him.

"Ah, yes, there's Tibbs. He can decide the question. It is warm, too, a 'cobbler' wouldn't go bad, and Fannie needn't know if I don't kiss her when I go home," and so I walked in.

Tibbs sprang up and grasped my hand, as though he hadn't seen me for a fortnight.

"Bless you, ole fellah, how are yer?"

"Lovely, my cherub, quite lovely, only it's rather warm."

"Just so. What'll you be iced with?" asked Tibbs, with such an angelic smile on his countenance.

"Ah, well—Tibbs!" Tibbs grew serious. "Fannie must not know anything about this."

"Of course not."

"Then I'll take a soda—cocktail."

"Same for me."

"Now, Tibbs?"

"Well, my dear Charlie."

"Fannie's birthday is approaching—of course she will expect a present. Of course she must have one. Now what would you advise. What sort of a present?"

"Present? Well, let me think," and Tibbs stroked his whiskers. "Why, a silk dress, a diamond necklace, any sort of jewelry, or poodle dog, silver-mounted, a saddle horse, or a coach and four, or a—"

"Pshaw! Do you remember what my income tax was?"

"Well, I didn't know but you wanted to launch out! But what objection to the dress? A silk dress, I presume, would be just the article your wife would choose, if she were consulted upon this matter."

"I think you are right. Now I think of it, I remember hearing her say a week ago that she wished she had another silk. But bless me! Tibbs, I could never choose a dress."

"Well, perhaps I might."

That was just what I wanted. Tibbs had taste. We started right off to make the purchase. It took us some time (or Tibbs rather) to get the article that suited exactly.

"Just enough to make a dress, sir. Not another piece like it in the city. Sold all but this to the Figginses of New York. The lady who wears this, sir, will cause all her female friends to howl with envy."

"I'll take it, darn me if I don't!" I hissed between my teeth.

"It's a splendid thing," remarked Tibbs, in an undertone.

And so I took it, and carried it down to the office, and locked it up in my desk until my dear Fannie's birthday arrived.

Now I should really like to describe the pattern of that silk dress, for it was really a splendid thing, as every one said who saw it, but as I am fully convinced that the reader could have no better idea of it than I have, did I attempt to describe, and as I am willing to own that I don't know how it did look, except that it was really "splendid," and was very rich, and would stand alone, why, of course you'll excuse me from making the attempt. I was only sure of one thing, and that was that I could tell that silk dress as far as I could see it on the street.

Well, when Fannie's birthday arrived I brought home the silk dress, and presented it to her; and I made a really fine presentation speech, at least, Tibbs said I did, for he was there, and of course he ought to know. And Fannie, why, bless her soul, she was so surprised and gratified that she dropped the dress, fell into my arms, and gave me such a kiss! that I felt really more than repaid.

Well, perhaps I wasn't a happy man for a week after that—I mean superlatively happy, for I am always pretty well pleased with the world, and myself, and Fannie—well, you know.

But my joys reached a climax, when, after a short delay, the dress was brought home from Madam Fitemnice's all cut and made, trimmed, frilled, and, well, I don't know what wasn't done to it, and really I

don't much know what was; but you should have seen my wife with it on. What a fit! Well now, I never took much notice of ladies' dresses, but I am sure that I never saw anything that seemed to come in just so perfect as that particular silk dress. Tibbs said so, too, for he was there at the time, and Tibbs pretends to know something about dresses.

If I ever did have an idea that Fannie was an angel, it was just at that particular minute when she glided into our drawing-room, arrayed in her new dress for the first time. To say that I was enraptured, doesn't half express my feelings. In fact, I find no words in Webster strong enough to express my feelings and high pressure emotions. Tibbs could, though. He spoke his admiration, but mine boiled within me. I was dumb; but Fannie must have seen in my eyes what I felt, and what I would have said, had I not been born "tongue-tied." That has always been my trouble. I think I'm a poet in the depths of my soul. But when my soul would give expression to its aspirations, its hopes, its fears—when it would bring forth some great thought, that perhaps would give dear Fannie's husband undying fame, my tongue refuses to discount. Heart-rending, isn't it?

But now, my dear reader, I come to the most affecting part of my story. How could that beautiful blue silk dress ever have brought so much sorrow, such tears, such woes to me? I should never have dreamed it; but it did. Tibbs can testify to that.

I reside on Hollis Street, in that large brick house with blue blinds, standing back from the street, with those great tall elms in front of it. There is an observatory upon the house, which you may have noticed, with four large windows in it of stained glass. Tibbs and I often go up there to smoke our cigars and discuss politics.

Directly opposite my house, in a small cottage, which stands very near the street, by the way, and which, during the summer months is completely covered with vines and flowers, lives Miss Flora Dudley, a lady of uncertain age. Tibbs boards with her. He has the front room up stairs, commanding a fine view of my house and grounds.

It was Wednesday morning, about ten o'clock. The weather was fair, and the wind was south—I always feel particularly

good-natured when the wind blows from that point of the compass. There was a very bright smile upon my countenance. I held the morning paper in my hand, though I was not reading. I was seated in the back office, near the west window. Green was whistling "Old Dog Tray" with the "Mocking-bird" variations—something quite new—no one whistled it but Green, our head clerk. He knew I was in, good humor, or he wouldn't have dared to whistle.

At this moment I heard the outer office door open, some one came in, and walked through. I turned around, and looked up just as Tibbs reached the door of the back office.

"Tibbs!" I cried, in alarm, "what has happened?"

I knew something had gone wrong, for he was pale as death. I placed a chair for him, and raised the window, and then ran for a palm-leaf fan. When I returned, Tibbs had recovered his color somewhat, especially around his nose.

"Charles," said he, in a deep hollow voice, that seemed to come from the tomb, "prepare yourself," and he took my hand in his.

"Tibbs—Ti—what! Sir? Speak!"

"Hush! I hardly dare. Can you bear it?"

Now I was somewhat excited, as you may suppose, and if Mr. Tibbs hadn't been my particular friend, I should have been tempted to pitch him out of the office for daring to disturb me in such a manner. If he'd got anything to communicate, why not out with it? I don't think there is any reason in frightening a man to death to prepare him for bad news.

"What do you mean?" I asked, not a little alarmed.

"Hush! Charles, my boy, listen." And Tibbs brought my ear down to his lips, and then whispered loud enough for the whole office to hear, "*She's false!*"

"False! Who the deuce is false?" I asked, regarding Tibbs with a vacant stare.

He had fallen back in his chair, completely overcome. His small leaden blue eyes rolled horribly, I thought he was in pain. I believe I had an idea that he had proposed to Miss Dudley and been rejected, though I must have been wandering in my mind to have supposed the latter.

"Whom do you refer to?"

"Fannie—your wife?" he gasped.

"No, no, not that? Fannie false?" I seized Tibbs by the whiskers. He howled with pain.

"Unsay those words, or by—"

"They're true. *I saw that dress!* 'Twas her, I'd swear."

I calmed myself with a great effort. Tibbs sat quietly in the chair, while I walked up and down the office. At last I stopped, and seated myself on the table, directly in front of Tibbs.

"Now, Mr. Tibbs, will you oblige me by telling your story, if you have any to tell?" and I frowned upon him. "Be short and concise."

"Well, sir," Tibbs began, "at nine o'clock this morning, I was sitting at the north window of my room, when I saw your wife come out of your house by the front way. She wore that blue silk dress that you gave her upon her birthday. She went down towards Crosby Street, and I thought nothing more of the matter; but in about fifteen minutes I saw her return, hanging upon the arm of a gentleman—"

"Gentleman?"

"Well, a man. She wore a veil over her face now, but that did not hide her blue silk dress—you know there's not another like it in the city. I was astonished. What could I do but follow them? I did. They went up Hollis Street to Eaton Street, then turned down that, and stopped at a large house of very respectable appearance, five doors from the corner. When they went up the steps, I rushed forward just in time to see them disappear through the door. The woman raised her veil just as they were going in, and I saw—"

"Who?"

"Your wife!"

"Could you swear?"

"I could."

"Give me your hand, Mr. Tibbs. Excuse me if I was rather rude when you first came in. You are my only friend now!" And I turned away to hide my emotion. Men's hearts, some say, never break, but mine seemed broken then. It mattered little what became of me then. If I could only have died believing her true!

"Well?" Tibbs started from his seat. "What will you do, Charlie?"

"Do? Nothing. If she loves another— if she is false to me, do you suppose I can

ever make her love me again? Can she ever be what she was to me? No. I only wish to remember her as I thought her, before this unhappy day."

"And you'll not probe the matter to the bottom?" Tibbs seemed very anxious.

"No. Why should I? You have told enough," I replied.

"Yes, but—well, Charlie, although I saw your wife walking the street with a stranger, and although I saw her enter a strange house, still there may be some palliating circumstances. I should look into the matter. Be cautious, though. Say nothing to your wife, but watch!" And Tibbs grasped my hand, and gave me a glance of pity, took his hat, and left the office.

It did not seem very singular that my wife did not take dinner with me. I inquired for her, and learned that she was in her room. The servant said she had a severe headache. I looked at the girl, trying to discover something by her countenance. I thought there was a half-smile upon her lips. Was she trying to deceive me—was she in the plot? It really seemed so. Half in sorrow, half in anger, I rushed from the house. Fannie would certainly think it strange that I had not come to see her, if only for a moment. I had never left the house before, morning, noon or night, without giving Fannie a kiss. No—well, I could not meet her then.

It was three o'clock in the afternoon of the same day. I was seated again in the back office. The door was locked, and I had given orders to Green to allow no one to disturb me.

I was sitting by the table with my face buried in my hands, when I heard a slight tap on the door. I did not answer it. The rap was repeated louder, and then I heard the voice of my friend Mr. Tibbs.

"Charlie?"

"What is it?" I asked, rising and opening the door.

Tibbs came in hurriedly.

"Take your hat, Charlie, and follow me. I've seen them again going towards Crosby Street. If we hurry we can follow them back."

Hardly knowing what I did, I seized my hat and followed Tibbs out of the office, up the street, till we came to the drug store at the corner of Hollis Street.

"Let's step in here and wait," said

Tibbs, pulling me into the drug store after him.

We stood looking through the glass door at every woman who passed up Crosby Street for at least half an hour, but nothing was to be seen of the strange gentleman and my wife.

"I think I'll go back to the office," I said, at last. "I could not look upon her. My Fannie false? God help me!"

"But you must see her." And Tibbs put his hand on my arm. "Wait—there! there she is—there they are now—look!"

I turned and looked in the direction indicated. Yes, there she was. I knew the dress. It was my dress—the one I had presented to her upon her birthday morn. I could have sworn to the dress. And her form, just her height, her slender figure and her graceful carriage. A stray golden curl peeped out from under her hat—my wife had beautiful golden hair. Alas! it was too true. My own eyes had seen her. Fannie indeed was false to me, for walking beside her was a tall elegant gentleman with black hair and heavy dark whiskers. He was dressed in a suit of black throughout, wore a silk hat and a pair of gold-bowed spectacles, but singular enough he wore a white neckcloth. Could it be a minister?

"Are you satisfied?" asked my friend Tibbs. "You see she has her veil down."

"I am satisfied," I replied. "I should know Fannie among a thousand—and that dress, too."

How lovingly she hung upon his arm. How confidently she seemed to be looking up into the face of the man beside her. My heart was torn with jealous pangs. Could Fannie be so false?

Just at this moment they turned the corner of Hollis Street, walking rapidly.

"Now we will follow them," whispered Tibbs, opening the door and dragging me into the street.

I did not reply. I did not care. Tibbs held me by the arm, and we walked on together up the street after the guilty couple, keeping all the while at a safe distance so as not to attract their notice. We passed my house. I looked up, but saw no one. The curtains were down at my wife's windows. Following on we saw them turn down into Eaton Street. When we turned the corner there was no one in sight. They had disappeared.

"Fifth door," whispered Tibbs, dragging me along.

We stopped in front of the house. Tibbs walked up the stone steps and rang the bell. "I never thought what he intended to do, I was so bewildered and confused. I noticed a name on the doorplate. Tibbs read it, and when the servant opened the door he inquired for Mr. Bristone.

We were ushered into the drawing-room at once. The gentleman with the heavy black whiskers bowed as we entered the room, though seemingly much surprised at our visit. He smiled blandly, though, particularly I thought when he noticed me. I grew enraged at once. To rob me of my wife and then to laugh in my face! That I felt was adding insult to injury. My feelings were all aroused. I could bear this no longer. Before Tibbs could speak a word I sprang forward and grasped the ministerial gentleman by the throat.

"Where is my wife, you villain?" I shouted.

The gentleman turned pale and tried to draw back, but I held him in a grasp like a vice. He tried to shout for help, but my hand was on his throat in a death-like clutch, and he could only gasp for breath.

Tibbs tried to pull me away, but he could not. My antagonist and I both fell with violence to the floor, and just at that moment I heard the shriek of a woman. 'Twas a wild horrid yell. I looked up. Heavens! I loosed my hold upon the strange gentleman and sprang to my feet.

"It is not my wife!" I yelled, dancing for very joy about the room. "My own Fannie is true to me! Tibbs, Tibbs, rejoice with me!" I shouted.

I can't describe the scene that followed. Tibbs undertook to explain, and at last succeeded, and Mr. and Mrs. Bristone laughed heartily, though that gentleman thought that the affair had been rather unpleasant for him, and so we bade them good-day.

"Well," said Tibbs, "it seems there is another blue silk in town just like your wife's."

"Yes, but I say, Tibbs, we won't say anything about this to Fannie."

"Of course not," replied Tibbs, with a very solemn countenance.

But somehow or other it did leak out. I think Mrs. Bristone must have told Fan-

nie, for both she and her husband called at our house not long after. I happened to be at the office at the time, but when I returned that evening, Fannie came to the door, and when she put up her little rosebud of a mouth for a kiss, she asked, smiling:

"Charlie, have you seen my blue silk walking out with the Episcopal minister lately?"

"O Fannie, can you ever forgive me?"

"Of course I can, you dear old simpleton."

And—well, I've never been jealous of Fannie since; but Mr. Bristone said the other day that he was always afraid to walk out with his wife when she wore that blue silk.

## MYRICK'S SHANTY.

BY JANE G. AUSTIN.

A HEAVY snowstorm had been falling all day, and the hilly forest road, poor enough at best, had become by nightfall nearly impassable. So thought at least the horses of the mail and accommodation stagecoach, plying between two of the principal towns in Wisconsin; and when, after struggling up one side of a long hill, and down the other, their driver allowed them to rest for a moment at the foot of a still harder one, they unanimously declined to move a single step. In vain the driver swore, whipped and coaxed. Neither blandishments nor severity was of the least avail, and finally the off leader settled the matter, by lying down in the snow with a resolute air, and absolutely refusing to be got up again on any terms.

The driver whose name was Peters, or, if you prefer it, *Tipsy Bill*—for he was as well known by one title as the other—looked for a few moments at the prostrate leader, gave him a hearty kick by way of a parting salute, and came to thrust his head in at the coach door. The passengers were but three in number, comprising a handsome middle-aged gentleman, with a particularly resolute and energetic face, and wearing a splendid fur travelling-cloak, a second gentleman, much younger than the first, handsome, also, but open to a charge of effeminacy from those who looked only at the careful elegance of his dress, or the whiteness of his gloved hands; and a remarkably pretty girl, who seemed to be upon very close and affectionate terms with the younger gentleman, while the elder one was a stranger to both.

*Tipsy Bill* looked slowly from one to the other of his three passengers, finishing with the elder gentleman.

"Got stuck, cap'n," said he.

"Eh! Stuck in the snow, d'y'e mean?" asked he of the fur cloak, rather sharply; for he had been asleep, and did not like to be roused.

"Rockon. Sam's down, and the old boy himself couldn't get him up. Clean tuckered out."

"Well, what's to be done?" asked the gentleman, after a little pause of dismay.

"Reck'n we'll have to foot it to Myrick's shanty, 'bout a half-mile further on. 'Spose we can stop there to-night, though 'tain't a public house."

"Half a mile!" murmured the young lady, looking at her companion.

"That will never do. This young lady can't walk half a mile through the snow, driver," expostulated that gentleman, rather angrily.

"She might ride one of the hosses, if she can stick on 'thout a saddle, and you can have another," replied Peters, reflectively.

"How will that do, Helen?" asked the first speaker, rather doubtfully, as he turned to the lady.

"O, very well for us, Arthur, but this other gentleman and the driver—how will they manage?"

"Thank you, madam; but I shall not object to walking, nor, I dare say, will the driver. Since we are companions in misfortune, allow me to introduce myself as John Rugby, of Cincinnati. It is agreeable to know how to address one's fellow-travellers, especially in such a strait as the present."

"Certainly, Mr. Rugby," replied the young man, at whom the speaker had looked in mentioning his name. "Allow me to return the compliment. This young lady is Miss Forbes, and my own name is Wingate."

Mr. Rugby bowed, as did Miss Forbes, and *Tipsy Bill*, who had looked on with open-mouthed admiration at the little ceremonial, muttered:

"When gentlefolks meets, compliments passes. Well," continued he aloud, "I reckon you'd better come and help me get the critters ready for a mount. We'll get snowed up where we be, if we don't look out."

The suggestion was a startling one, and both gentlemen, leaping from the coach, struggled through the soft snow, to the spot where Peters was rapidly unharnessing the horses, who, with drooping heads and heaving sides, stood patient and forlorn. As for Sam, that unfortunate animal lay where he had fallen, and already half covered with

snow, seemed quite incapable of rising. "The gal had better ride Nancy. She's the quietest of the lot; and you can take Sally," remarked Peters to Mr. Wingate, who, repressing his disgust at the profane mention of his divinity, nodded assent, and went to speak to Miss Forbes, while Mr. Rugby, wading round to the back of the coach, busied himself with unstrapping his trunk.

"What you want o' that, cap'n?" shouted Peters. "You can't carry it along, and it's safe enough here."

"I want something out of it, my man," returned Mr. Rugby, quietly, and proceeded to unstrap and unlock the trunk, while Peters and Wingate, leading Nancy close to the door of the stagecoach, placed the young lady upon the back of the patient animal.

"Can you ride so, Helen?" asked Wingate, tenderly.

"Yes—quite well. Are you ready?" asked the girl, shyly glancing around, to see if the pressure of the hand accompanying the question had been noticed.

"All ready." And Mr. Wingate sprang lightly to the back of the other horse, while Peters busied himself with putting the harnesses and robes inside of the coach, and leaving everything as secure as possible.

"Come, cap'n," cried he, when all was ready.

"Coming." And from behind the coach appeared Mr. Rugby, carrying in one hand a little flat red trunk or box.

"Got something val'y'ble there, I reckon," remarked Topsy Bill, whose free expression of opinion was never checked by any excessive regard to his own business as distinguished from that of other people.

Mr. Rugby made no answer to this, but, passing by the driver who stood holding the bridle of the third horse, he stopped beside poor prostrate Sam, who seemed to have resigned himself to lie where he had fallen, until the night and the increasing cold should settle his fate.

"I will ride this horse," said Mr. Rugby.

"You might as well talk about riding the rail-fence, mister," exclaimed Peters, impatiently. "You get on this critter, and go along with the other folks, and I'll see to him. Reckon I'll get him up, if I skin him for't."

"There's no need of that, my man. Horses are to be managed better. Get on

the horse you hold, and lead the way yourself. Sam and I will follow."

"All right, cap'n, if you say so; but you'll have to foot it, I tell you now—and as for the hoss, if you can't get him along, leave him, and I'll go back for him."

With these words, Topsy Bill climbed up the side of the animal he had been holding, and led the way down the road, followed by the young gentleman and lady, who had been for some moments absorbed in a whispered conversation, accompanied by anxious looks along the snowy road, in the direction whence they had come.

Left alone, Mr. Rugby proceeded to clear the snow from the head and nostrils of the exhausted horse, and then to pour a small quantity of brandy down his throat from a handsome travelling-flask. The effect was instantaneous, and, with the addition of a few kind and encouraging words and gentle manipulations, soon restored so much strength and courage to the spirit of the exhausted and somewhat perverse creature, that he struggled feebly to his feet, and neighing inquiringly, looked about him.

"Yes, they've gone on, Sam, and we will make the best of our way after them," said Mr. Rugby, dexterously arranging the dragging harness, and then, with one hand upon the horse's mane, leading him quietly on, while Sam, with another neigh of approval and consent, rubbed his shaggy head upon the shoulder of his guide.

"That wont do my coat any good; but if it helps you, all right, my friend," replied Mr. Rugby. And horse and man proceeded with the most amicable understanding, in the direction taken by their companions, whom they overtook, just as the driver, still seated upon his raw-boned steed, was kicking at the door of a low rambling loghouse, standing somewhat back from the road, in a clearing of about an acre.

"Ah! Glad to see you, sir," said Mr. Wingate, as his guide approached.

"Thank you. Is this Myrick's?"

"So Peters says. Rather a hard-looking place—especially for a lady," replied the young man, in a lower tone.

"Yes; but better than the snowy road, or the stagecoach without horses," returned Rugby, cheerfully, smiling, as he spoke, at the young girl, whose rueful face and quivering lips showed but too plainly her opinion of the situation.

"And better, Helen, than what we have



left behind us," murmured Wingate, close at her ear.

A faint blush tinged the girl's cheek, and she smiled into her lover's face.

"Dog gone it—can't you open some time, you old witch?" grumbled Topsy Bill, bestowing another kick upon the door, with whose fastenings the fumbling hand of some one inside was busy. As he spoke, the wooden latch was raised, and Bill, waiting for no further ceremony, pushed in, nearly upsetting an old woman, who had been about to open the door.

"What's the matter there, Ma'am Myrick? Couldn't you let a fellow in out of the cold sooner than all that?" expostulated Peters.

The old woman stared at him a moment, and then fixed her disagreeable black eyes upon each member of the party in turn, before she asked:

"Well, Bill Peters, what's your will, now the door is open?"

"Where's your son, old woman? Aint he about?" demanded Peters, still trying to push open the door, which the old woman obstinately held half shut.

"What you want of him?" persisted she.

"Why, we've got to stop here to-night, all hands of us, hosses and all, and I want Joe to show me where to put the critters," said Peters, doggedly.

"Well, you can't, then. We've got company, and can't 'commode you, nohow," retorted the hag, spitefully.

"There aint no can't about it. I tell you I'm going to stay here, and so's these folks."

The old woman seemed disposed to continue to oppose this determination, but before she could speak, found herself rudely thrust aside by the very person for whom Peters was inquiring.

"What's all this row about, Bill Peters?" asked the new-comer, sulkily, while his bloodshot eyes rolled from one to the other of his guests with greedy and curious glances.

"Why, my cattle have gi'n out; the old wagon's stuck in the drift, and you've got to keep us to-night, any way. You'll get paid, never fear for that—we aint beggars nor thieves."

"Yes, we will pay handsomely for the accommodation, and really cannot get further," interposed Mr. Wingate.

The man still hesitated, but Mr. Rugby, who had hitherto not spoken, stepped for-

ward, and saying, pleasantly, "Of course you cannot refuse us, when you know that to do so is the same as to take our lives," he walked quietly by the surly host, followed by his two companions, while Joe, with a sulky scowl upon his face, but no further expression of unwillingness, stepped out, and helped Peters to put the horses under such rude shelter as was to be found in the cowshed of the establishment.

Returning to the shanty, when this was effected, Peters found his passengers seated about the hearth, where the old woman was already frying some pork, and a kettle of potatoes bubbled over the fire. At the further corner of the room, behind a little table, where some half-emptied mugs and a scattered pack of cards showed the nature of their late employment, sat a couple of ill-looking fellows, their hats dragged low over their eyes, and their whole appearance unsavory and dubious in the extreme.

"Ho! There's the company," muttered Peters, recalling the old woman's statement when he first applied for admission, and glancing somewhat doubtfully at the two fellows, who, never looking up or allowing their faces to be fully visible, remained in whispered conversation.

Dragging another table from its place against the wall, the old woman now served her supper by pouring the slices of pork, with the fat which they had been fried in, into a deep tin pan, which she placed in the middle of the table. The potatoes, still in their jackets, were dished in another pan, and a quantity of cold Indian bannock produced from the closet, and laid upon the board. By way of nectar to this ambrosia, Mrs. Myrick next poured the liquid contained in a battered coffee-pot into some tin cups, and sulkily announced:

"The vittles is ready. You ken set up, folks."

The travellers, cold, weary and hungry, found themselves well inclined to comply with even so uninviting an invitation, and, drawing to the table the stools and benches wherewith they had been accommodated, managed, with the exception of Miss Forbes, to make a hearty, if not a very palatable supper. The old woman, crouching upon the hearth, refreshed herself, after her labors, with a short black pipe, whose fumes soon added themselves to the other unsavory odors of the place, while her son rejoining his associates, made a

third in the mysterious conversation for a while, and then retired with them to the shed.

"Be them fellows going to stop here to-night?" asked Peters of the old woman, as they disappeared.

"Reck'n."

"Who be they, any way?" pursued the driver.

"They're traders. Dunno their names."

"Traders! And what they trading for with you and Joe, grandma?" asked Peters, contemptuously.

"'Taint none of my business, and I dunno as it's none o' yourn. If 'tis, you kin ask Joe," replied the woman, yet more ungraciously.

"Thank'y, thank'y, gran'ma'am, but there's no 'casion to ask any one. I see plain enough a'ready—it's manners you've been trading in. Sold yourn at a good price, I hope?"

To this the old woman vouchsafed no reply, except a contemptuous grunt, and Mr. Rugby, interposing with some questions about the horses, diverted the driver's attention, and put a stop to the altercation.

Supper over, and the table removed, the little party drew close to the hearth, which Dame Myrick had made some pretence of sweeping, and upon which Peters had quietly piled the whole supply of wood, thrown into a corner near at hand, to serve as a reserve for the evening.

"Reck'n you'd better fetch in some more, now you've done that," grumbled the old woman. And the driver, with a good-natured "All right, gran'ma'am," went out, and returned after some moments, with an armful of wood, and a very grave countenance. No one was, however, at leisure to notice this latter phenomenon, all eyes and ears being bent upon Mr. Rugby, who was narrating an experience of his own upon the steppes of Siberia, where he had been attacked and pursued by wolves, narrowly escaping with life.

This story naturally elicited a similar one from Mr. Wingate, who had read of, if he had not seen, adventures as marvellous as those of his fellow-traveller. Next, Peters, who had somewhat recovered his equanimity, gave the exciting story of a bear-hunt of the previous winter, occurring in the very woods where they were now detained, and finally, Miss Forbes, at the request of her lover, told the history of a burglary

upon her father's premises, where she and her younger sister, personating their father and brother, who chanced to be from home, had successfully driven away the robbers, and rescued the booty already packed up, and ready to be carried away.

In the midst of this story, the door opened stealthily, to admit Joe, who, skulking into a corner near the old woman, sat down and listened attentively to the story, his gloomy eyes meantime wandering over the faces and figures of the strangers in a curiously eager and speculative manner.

"Whar's them fellars?" asked Peters, in a low voice, while Miss Forbes paused for a moment to take breath.

"Gone on to Stillwater. Their mates come along with a pung, and took 'em up," muttered Joe.

The driver eyed him leisurely for a moment, but made no answer, beyond a significant "Humph!" and then, folding his arms across his breast, and tilting his chair until his broad shoulders rested against the wall, plunged into a reverie of apparently much perplexity and annoyance.

The story of the burglary over, a lively conversation followed, lasting for about an hour, and then Miss Forbes, pulling out her watch, exclaimed:

"Dear me! Five o'clock. Why, my watch has stopped. What is it by you, Arthur?"

Mr. Wingate produced his watch, an elegant French article, nearly as showy and fanciful as Miss Forbes's little Genevan bijou.

"Why, I say nine o'clock, but it must be later. My watch is, I grieve to say, rather unreliable. How is it by you, Mr. Rugby?"

"Just half past nine," replied that gentleman, showing the dial of a solid English chronometer, whose plain but rich case was the very least of its merits.

As the three watches returned to their pockets, Peters, without moving his head, turned his eyes upon Joe, who sat nearly abreast of him. The face of the backwoodsman had changed as if by magic, its usual sulky indifference giving way to an expression of greedy ferocity and covetousness, more like that of an animal contemplating a forbidden feast, than anything in human form that even Bill Peters had ever seen before. Slightly turning his head, the stage-driver carried on his scrutiny to the face of the old woman crouching in an an-

gle of the hearth, and even his hardy cheek turned pale, as he caught the feline glance of her glittering black eyes, and the cruel working of her thin lips. He still was watching her furtively, when Miss Forbes, turning with a smile, said:

"And now, if you please, Mrs. Myrick, I will retire. Where can you put me?"

"You kin have my bedroom, right in there; and the two men kin have Joe's, up in the loft," replied the woman, with more alacrity than she had yet shown. "Peters, you kin bunk down here on the floor, 'long o' him, can't ye?"

"Reckon," replied the driver, dryly.

"Come along this way miss," continued the woman, in whose manner a sort of anxious haste had suddenly replaced the sulky stolidity of her previous demeanor, and, as she lighted a tallow candle at the fire, Peters noticed that her hand trembled, so that she could hardly manage it.

"Now, then, miss," repeated she, as she rose to her feet, and, with a gay good-night to her companions, Miss Forbes followed the woman into a small bedroom, or rather closet, adjoining the kitchen, and only large enough to contain the frowzy bed, a large chest, and a clumsy stool.

"I've put some sheets on the bed for ye," remarked the dame, setting the candlestick upon the chest, near the head of the bed. "I sleep in betwixt the blankets myself, but I reckoned nice-folks like you 'ould want sheets."

"Thank you. Yes, I prefer them, decidedly," replied Miss Forbes, repressing a smile. "But where will you sleep?"

"O, there's a bunk out in the kitchen, that I kin crawl inter. Joe and Peters are going to stretch down before the fire, and your men'll go up in the loft."

"I'm sorry to turn you out in this way, and I hope you will be comfortable in the bunk," said Miss Forbes, graciously, inwardly wondering what sort of a thing a bunk might be, and waiting to be left alone before beginning to undress.

But Mother Myrick had fixed her glittering eyes upon the bunch of *breloques* dangling from the young lady's watch-chain, and now approached her skinny hand to grasp them, exclaiming:

"My! What pooty things! Be they all solid goold?"

"O yes!" replied Miss Forbes, coldly and decidedly, withdrawing from the advanc-

ing hand. "I will bid you good-night, now, Mrs. Myrick, as I am very tired, and should like to get to sleep as soon as possible."

"I don't see what henders you then," muttered the old woman, insolently; but nevertheless obeying the hint so openly administered, and shuffling out of the room without further remark.

Left alone, Miss Forbes's first care was to secure the door, as far as this could be done, by thrusting a bit of wood into the staple above the latch; her next, to look at the window, which, stifling though the air might become, she was glad to find securely nailed into the casing. The room contained neither closet nor chimney, so that there seemed absolutely no possibility of entering it, except by the door, and Miss Forbes, once more examining the simple fastenings she had applied, concluded it safe.

"I did not know I could be so cowardly," murmured she, looking once more around her little cell, and then examining the bed, which, in spite of Mrs. Myrick's boasted care, seemed so uninviting that the young lady determined not to undress, but simply loosening her clothes, and wrapping herself in the comforter, to lie upon the outside of the bed until morning.

These arrangements were just effected, and the light extinguished, when the creaking of the ladder staircase, and the sound of steps overhead, suggested to Helen that the gentlemen were retiring to the loft, where she had heard that they would sleep. This supposition was presently verified by the sound of their voices in murmured conversation, and the young girl, with a considerable sense of relief from her nervous apprehensions, in discovering that protection was so near at hand, in case she should wish to summon it, composed herself to sleep, her latest waking consciousness being of murmuring voices in the next room, which, as her ears became dulled by approaching slumber, seemed to die gradually into the distance, until they mingled with the fantastic visions of a delicious sleep.

But although these voices had appeared to Miss Forbes to die gradually away, they were in reality as active an hour after she had fallen asleep, as at that moment, for Bill Peters, the driver, when invited to stretch himself upon a blanket before the fire, had declared that he was never more wakeful in his life, and should very probably remain so all night, offering at the same

time to relinquish the blanket and the position to Joe, whom he politely begged not to remain awake a moment on his account.

But Joe, muttering some reply intended to be civil and hospitable, produced from a cupboard a short black bottle, with some sugar and spoons, and hanging the tea-kettle again upon the fire, dragged the table to the hearth, and seated himself beside it. The kettle hummed drowsily for a few moments; then, as if suddenly taking a determination to be jolly, and make a night of it, began to sing merrily, and finally to boil over, with a tremendous sputter of steam, flying ashes, and clattering iron lid, showing at least a disposition to do its own share toward the general entertainment. Joe Myrick swung the black crane forward, poured a quantity of rum into each of the two cracked mugs he had set ready, mingled it well with sugar, and then, slightly tilting the jolly tea-kettle, infused an amount of boiling water, sufficient to bring the mixture to an agreeable temperature.

This done, he glanced at the driver, who had been watching these preparations with an air of stolid resolution, which proved how great was the temptation he was decided to resist.

"Come and take a drink, wont ye, Petera?" urged Joe, with a show of good fellowship somewhat incongruous with his general demeanor.

"No. No, I thank'y, Joe. I reckon I'll get along jist as well without it, for once," replied Peters, wiping his mouth upon the sleeve of his coat.

Joe raised the mug to his mouth, and took a long draught, then set it down, smacking his lips.

"Good liquor that, any way," said he. "Them fellers that was here when you first come," continued he, lowering his voice to a confidential whisper, "trade a little over the line into Canada, and it was from them I got it. I don't mind telling you, Bill, but in course it's to be kept dark; and like enough I could get you a gallon or two of the same sort, if you wanted it."

Peters hesitated. This explanation of the presence of the two ruffians in the shanty, and their obvious desire for concealment, was, to be sure, a very rational one, and he knew a good deal of smuggling went on over this lonely and unguarded frontier. Myrick's shanty would be a safe and out-of-the-way depository for the run goods, and

Myrick himself a very appropriate agent. Added to this, the fumes from the second mug of toddy, which Joe was carefully compounding, came curling into the very nostrils, involuntarily spread to catch them, and Topsy Bill had tasted no liquor since noon that day. Two proverbs pithily condense the history of the next two hours:

"The woman (or man) who deliberates, is lost;" and, "It is only the first step which is difficult."

Two hours later, while Helen Forbes dreamed the roseate visions of a young girl who loves, while her lover and his companion slept the sleep of weary men, while, from the filthy trough where she lay, the black eyes of the old woman blinked and glittered like those of a snake awaiting the moment to spring at the foe it dreads and hates, while Joe, upon whose brutish temperament no amount of alcohol could work any perceptible change, sat stolid and sullen, staring back at her, Topsy Bill lay between them, upon the floor, snoring in his drunken sleep.

These sounds it might have been, or the shadow of coming evil it might have been, or the torch of her guardian angel it might have been; but certain it is, that just at this moment Helen Forbes awoke suddenly, with a strange chill of horror thrilling her heart, and a cry upon her lips, which, happily for her, never went beyond them. Starting up, the young girl stared wildly about her for a moment, then remembered where she was, and tried to reason herself again to quiet, but searched, meantime, with eyes and ears, for any possible cause of apprehension, while her throbbing heart and trembling limbs announced their readiness to help, in any panic that might be suggested, at the shortest possible notice.

But the eyes, after a rapid survey of the gloomy cell, found nothing more fearful than an outlined parallelogram of light at one side of the room, proving at once that the door was there situated, and that the room beyond was still lighted. The ears added to this information, that in that were a number of persons talking in a low voice, and another asleep, and snoring loudly. These circumstances, although by no means frightful in themselves, appeared to Miss Forbes at least suspicious, and, cautiously stepping from the bed, she crept to the door, and listened intently. The speaker was the old woman, and she said:

"Carry him out to the shed, I tell you, boys. Maybe there'll be a fight, and if he wakes there'll be one more to settle."

"O, he's fast enough, old woman," returned a gruff voice, accompanied by the sound of a kick upon some unresisting substance, and a subdued laugh.

"Topsy Bill couldn't stand out against the liquor, though he set out he was going to," added still another strange voice; and the sound of several feet, carrying a heavy burden, became audible, and a draught of fresh air through the house showed that the outside door had been opened.

Her apprehensions now roused to the utmost, Helen sought anxiously for a crevice wide enough to give her a view of what was passing without, and presently succeeded in finding one, just in time to see the house door open again, to admit Joe Myrick, followed by the two ruffianly fellows whose departure in the first part of the evening had been announced.

"There, old lady," said one of these, "we've laid him into the very nest where Jake and I have been keeping ourselves warm this two hours back. Thought Joe wasn't never coming."

"Had to wait to get Topsy Bill drunk. He smelt a rat, I reckon; and anyway, what's we going to do with him in the morning?" demanded Joe.

"He needn't never see no morning," muttered the man called Jake.

"There aint no trouble about that, sence we've made up our minds not to run over this road again, and sence Joe's concluded to go 'long with us. All we've got to do is to crook our claws on the plunder the quickest sort o' fashion, get the old pung out from behind the shed, and, sence our own critter has gone lame, just tackle on them four stage hosses. We'll put 'em along, if Peters couldn't, I'll warrant ye. Then we three'll pile in, and the old woman kin go ter sleep agin. She wont know nothing about it in the morning, o' course; and though there'll like enough be a fuss, they can't touch her. As for us, we'll be in Queen Victory's country 'fore morning, and by next week be aboard a British steamer. What that chap's got in his little red chest 'll more nor pay the passage, I am thinking."

"That's so," chimed in Jake. "He wouldn't be so precious on't if it warn't walyble."

"The closes in his trunk warn't much, anyway," pursued the first. "The other chap's wor twice as good."

"All the better for you," growled Jake, discontentedly.

"Didn't you have the same chance as I did, you fool?" exclaimed his companion, angrily. "You picked the rich fellow's trunk because you thought 'twould be the fattest, and now you're disapp'inted, you want to growl."

"I got the gal's," chuckled Joe Myrick, drawing a box from his pocket, which Helen easily recognized as her own jewel-casket; "and I reckon there's enough here to buy me as many new breeches as I shall want for the rest of my life."

"Halloo! Let's see what's inside, Joe," exclaimed the others, crowding round, while Myrick, thrusting the edge of a chisel under the lid, paused in the act of prying it off.

"Honor bright, now, mates!" exclaimed he. "This is my lot, and none o' yourn, rec'lect."

"All right, Joe, honor bright," assented the other thieves, while the old woman's shrivelled lips worked with a strange eagerness, and her rheumy old eyes lighted like the blue lights above a new-made grave.

Helen cautiously drew back from the door, and, pressing both hands upon her forehead, strove to control her faltering senses, and to decide upon some course of action, before action should be too late. That it was the design of these ruffians to rob, and perhaps to murder them all, she could no longer doubt; and even were Mr. Rugby and Arthur Wingate fully alive to their danger, there were but two against three, without counting the hag, whose will for mischief was evidently as good as that of her more dangerous accomplices. But, sleeping and unarmed, as she supposed her friends to be, their peril darkened to almost certain doom, and for a moment the young girl abandoned herself to despair. Only for a moment, however; in the next, with clenched hands and knitted brow, she was searching for the means of relief, which she had suddenly determined must and should be found. She must warn the sleepers, and that at once, for, as she felt quite certain, nothing but the examination of the jewel-box deferred for a few moments the operations of the robbers.

But how? She had already satisfied herself that there was but one entrance to, consequently but one exit from, the room, and that through the very door behind which she was for the moment protected. No other! In the darkness the young girl groped her way around the room, feeling of the walls, and trying the little window, even attempting to raise one of the rough planks of the floor, thinking she might perhaps crawl out from under the house, and even at the risk of discovery, rouse the sleepers by throwing pebbles against the window of the loft:

The floor planks were secure, but, by a sudden connection of ideas, Helen remembered that while Mr. Rugby and his companion were moving about their room, she had noticed that a board in the floor, directly above her head, was loose, and, as one of them stepped upon it, tilted, so that she had expected it to fall.

A sudden determination entered the young girl's mind, and with noiseless rapidity she groped for the rude bench, planted it upon the bed, and, mounting upon it, found herself unable to stand upright, her shoulders coming upon a level with the floor above, while her head remained bent upon her breast. Clinging to the naked timber with one hand, with the other she pressed upon the planks above, and, to her great joy, felt one of them yield to the pressure. Placing herself directly beneath it, and exerting her whole strength, she soon succeeded in raising the end of the plank sufficiently to move it aside, and to thrust her head through the opening. The loft was dark and silent as a tomb, but, while Helen hesitated, a maidenly impulse checking the energy hitherto controlling her, she distinguished the creak of footsteps upon the staircase, and at the same time something like the sound of a ladder placed against the side of the house from without. The robbers were preparing two modes of attack, and the next moment a cautious hand tried the latch of her own door. Helen hesitated no longer, but called, softly:

"Arthur! Arthur!" And again, "O Arthur, do wake!"

The regular breathing of the sleepers alone answered her, unless the sound of a cautious hand groping at the window could be called an answer. The result had become but a trial of speed between herself

and the robbers, and Helen, with a final and convulsive effort, threw herself forward and upward, and, she scarcely knew how, succeeded in her wild attempt, and stood breathless and exhausted in the silent chamber. Rushing across the room, she reached the bed, and wildly beating with icy hands upon the faces of the sleepers, sobbed:

"Wake! O wake—for God's sake!"

"What? Who is it? What's this?" exclaimed Wingate, starting up, while from beyond him resounded the ominous click of a pistol.

"It is I! It is Helen, Arthur. Don't fire at me, Mr. Rugby. They are coming to rob and murder you—there are three of them. Hark! Hear the window."

In effect, the window, cautiously raised and lowered again at this moment, gave startling corroboration to her words.

"Hush!" whispered Rugby. "Wingate, are you armed?"

"Yes. Helen, hide behind the bed," said the young man, in the same tone; and at this moment the window was again lifted, and simultaneously the trap door, opening at the top of the stairs, was quietly raised, admitting not only the burly figure of Joe Myrick, but a faint light from the fire below, by whose help the travellers distinguished the figure of another man climbing in at the window.

"Fire?" whispered Wingate, inquiringly.

"No—wait," returned Rugby; and the next instant his voice rang through the loft, clear and stern:

"Halt, there! What do you want?"

The ruffians, taken by surprise, shrank back for a moment, but, reassured by numbers, and the conviction that their victims were unprepared for a contest, the fellow called Jake answered, truculently:

"Want your money and your walybles. Want that ere pocket-trunk o' yourn. Give us them, and we'll let you off; but if you don't, we'll make quick work of the bull kit."

"Unless you quit the room this moment, and leave us and ours undisturbed till morning, I will shoot you like a dog," replied Rugby, with a cold decision, more appalling than the other's ferocity.

Jake hesitated, but his companion, who had silently followed him into the window, now as silently rushed forward, brandishing a knife, and fearlessly precipitating

himself upon the speaker, who sprang from the bed to receive him, firing his pistol as he did so, and shouting:

"Fire, Wingate! Take the other."

Wingate, without waiting the order, had already pressed the trigger of his pistol, and Jake, uttering a fearful cry of rage and pain, rolled snarling like a wounded beast at his feet. At the same moment Joe Myrick, springing forward, swinging an axe above his head, aimed a blow at the skull of the young man, which must have cleft it to the chin had he not sprung nimbly aside; at the same moment discharging the second barrel of his revolver in the face of his assailant, who only escaped the ball by stumbling forward with the impetus of his own blow. The next moment he had seized Wingate in his brawny arms, expecting to dash him to the ground with ease; but under the elegant proportions of the young man were hidden more of native power and trained skill than would have sufficed for the discomfiture of half a dozen awkward clowns like the one he now handled, and Joe Myrick presently rolled upon the floor, stunned and helpless. His victor, pausing one instant to regain his breath, was turning to aid his friend, who, sitting upon the edge of the bed, silently attempted to stanch the blood flowing from an ugly cut in his arm, while his late assailant lay dead at his feet; when, with a piercing shriek, Helen Forbes, darting from the corner where she had crouched in silent terror, flew past him, to throw her arms about the stooping and malign figure of the old woman, who had crept unobserved upon the scene, just as her son fell dead, as she supposed, and who, snatching a knife from the floor, was about to revenge him, by plunging it into the back of Arthur Wingate.

The knife fell, but not as the fury had intended. Turning suddenly, as she rushed past him, the young man saw the blow—saw it fall upon the devoted heart offered to save his own, and could but interpose in time to prevent Helen from falling at his feet.

"O my darling! My darling!" cried he, straining her wildly to his breast; and then, turning with fury upon the exultant hag, cried, with tears of rage springing to his eyes, "O, if you were not a woman, and old, I would kill you inch by inch."

"But at least she shall do no more mis-

chief at present," exclaimed Rugby, snatching the blood-stained handkerchief from his arm, and with it, in spite of her struggles, securely binding the old woman's arms behind her back, finishing by securing her to the bedpost.

At this moment a violent knocking was heard below, but no one had time or thought to attend to it. Wingate, hanging over the lifeless figure of his betrothed, wept like a child, while Mr. Rugby, hastily unlocking the little red trunk which had caused so much disaster and bloodshed, took from it a vial and held it to her face. The pungent odor of ammonia filled the room, and Rugby calmly said:

"Courage, Wingate. I am a surgeon of some skill. I do not think she is dead; and if she is not, I will cure her. Bring her down stairs—or, stay, let me do so, while you bring my box. It contains my instruments, which the fools mistook for treasures, as indeed they are, being a special set brought by me from London last month."

While speaking he raised the young girl tenderly in his arms, and bore her down the ladder. As his feet appeared below the floor of the loft, the knocking, which had become almost furious, ceased suddenly, and a voice exclaimed:

"Well, good people, I did not expect to raise you at all. Why, what on earth is this?"

"A wounded woman, sir. Please burst open that door. There is a bed beyond it."

The stranger, a white-haired, red-faced old man, with the air of one more used to command than to obey, stared a moment at the quiet speaker, and then, as his eye fell upon the figure drooping from his arms, turned to comply with the order. One kick of his sturdy foot decided the matter of the frail fastening, and, as the latch flew from its hold, the door opened wide, allowing Doctor Rugby to pass through, and to lay his charge upon the bed.

"Bring that candle, if you please, sir; and, Wingate, let me have the trunk," directed the doctor, cool and dominant as a general upon the battlefield he is sure of conquering.

"What! Why, who is this? Wingate! But Helen! This is not Helen?" And the old gentleman, suddenly roused from his astonishment and his indignation, snatched a candle from the table, and

rushing into the bedroom, held it close to the deadly face of the young girl. "My God! It is Helen! My child, my child!" And, as the doctor caught the candle from his hand, the old man sank upon the bed in a fit of hysterical tears.

Wingate, in his turn, stood like one petrified, his eyes fixed now upon the figure of the young girl, now upon that of the old man.

"Mr. Forbes!" gasped he, at length. "But how came he here?"

"Young man," interposed the stern voice of the surgeon, "do you wish this woman to recover?"

"God knows how ardently," was the reply.

"Then remember that agitation as she is recovering will kill her. If this is her father, take him away, and induce him to keep quiet, if possible. Then return to help me. Every moment has a chance of life—too many lost are fatal."

The cool clear tones of the surgeon carried conviction, and Wingate, controlling himself by a powerful effort, soon succeeded in persuading the almost exhausted father to accompany him to the outer room, and was soon able to leave him comparatively quiet, while he returned to assist the surgeon, who was already able to inform him that the young girl's wound, though deep, was not necessarily mortal.

"And now," said the surgeon, an hour later, "we may leave Mr. Forbes beside his daughter for a few moments, and go to attend to those fellows above stairs. They will give me some fine practice in pistol wounds, at least."

But Doctor Rugby was doomed to disappointment. With the exception of the dead body of the nameless ruffian whom he had killed, and the old woman writhing and swearing in her bonds, the loft was empty. Jake and Joe had escaped together, and, as was presently discovered, had stolen the horse and sleigh left standing at the door by Mr. Forbes's driver, while he crept into the house to see what was going on.

"Never mind—let them go. They will neither of them be likely to forget to-night, or care to come in our way again," said the doctor, philosophically. "Let us release this wretched old woman, and in the morning some one shall put this body into a hole in the snow. I suppose it wouldn't

do for me to dissect him. And now, Wingate, tell me, in two words, who you all are, and what you are about."

"Helen will live, you say."

"Yes, I tell you."

"In two words, then, she is the only child of the old man who sits beside her, and who is a wealthy and retired Indian merchant of New York. I am a poor devil of a lawyer, settled in a little town of Minnesota. I loved Helen, and she loved me, before I went West, and when I returned for her last autumn she was ready to go back with me; but her father said no—he had a better match for her. So we ran away, and he, I suppose, ran after us. I only wish we had waited to marry first, for then he could not separate us. I fancy he will try it now, but he will find it a difficult matter. Helen is true steel under her highbred airs."

"He shan't separate you, nor try to. I won't let him," said Doctor Rugby, quietly, as he turned to reenter the house.

When Topsy Bill awoke next morning, to find himself lying among his horses in the shed, his astonishment was both loud and profane; nor was it in any whit lessened when, on entering the house, he was informed of the incidents of the night. But none of his auditors were prepared for the burst of penitence and good resolution into which this astonishment finally subsided.

"Twas all my fault!" asseverated he. "I knew the scoundrels was hatch'n up mischief, and if I'd kept myself sober—But it is a lesson—a dog gone good lesson; and may I be—(something very bad)—if another drop of the cussed stuff ever runs over my tongue again."

We should not omit to mention that this hasty resolution was sacredly and persistently kept, until, in his hale old age, to have called Mr. William Peters Topsy Bill would have been to commit at once a stupidity and an insolence.

The authorities, such as were to be found, chose to take but little notice of the catastrophe at Myrick's shanty, except by removing the old woman to the almshouse, where she soon after died.

Helen Forbes, far too ill to be moved, did not, however suffer, either for attention or comforts, in her lonely hospital, being assiduously cared for by her father, her lover and her skillful physician, and supplied by almost daily expresses with



every luxury love could suggest or money procure, even to an accomplished city nurse.

"Is there anything, doctor—anything more that I can do for her, or get for her?" asked the father, almost daily, until at last the surgeon answered:

"Yes. Tell her *she may marry Wingate*, and send for a parson to tie the knot. Then we'll all go on for Minnesota again."

"Shall I? Would it make her really happier than anything else on earth?" asked the old man, musingly.

"Take my word for it," said Doctor Rugby, with wise sententiousness.

"I will," answered the father, in the same tone. And before the week was out Mr. and Mrs. Wingate, Mr. Forbes and Doctor Rugby left Myrick's shanty—the three former in their own carriage, the latter riding Sam, whom he had purchased of the stage proprietor as his own particular steed.

What next?

Go to Minnesota and see.

## OUR REN.

BY N. P. DARLING.

THE summer that I was twenty-two I spent at home, in company with my sister Meg and a schoolmate of hers from the A—Seminary—a Miss Lorence Pennoyer. To say that Lorence was beautiful, would not half express it. She was charming, bewitching, dazzling—stunning—ah! that's the word I've been in search of. Yes, she was perfectly stunning. As near as I can calculate, she was a perfect Juno! Decidedly magnificent! Just such a woman as a man of meek disposition would feel in duty bound to worship. But, as I was not one of those meek and lowly sort of men, I felt no inclination to bow the knee to this truly grand and really superb female. Still, she awakened such feelings and emotions in this heart of mine, as no other woman had ever done. To be plain about the matter, she raised the very deuce with my heart, before I had been acquainted with her twenty-four hours.

"She talked, she smiled, my heart she wyl'd  
She charmed my soul, I wist na how;  
And ay the stound, the deadly wound,  
Carn frae her een sae bonnie blue."

Yes, she had bonnie blue eyes, and beautiful dark brown hair; and then *such* a mouth! Rich ripe lips that reminded me of about three-quarters of a yard of red (fine red) flannel. Her pearly teeth, when she smiled, bore a very strong resemblance to the "finger-board" of a grand piano; and then that smile—ah! you should have seen it! Comparatively speaking, condensed sunshine was dim and misty beside it. The extraordinary brilliancy of her smiles at night fairly made the moon turn pale.

As I think I remarked before, her form was superb. She measured just five feet and nine inches "from tip to tip," and the circumference of her delicate wasplike waist was just forty-nine inches.

Dear reader, I ask you candidly, do you

think it possible for a human being with the warm blood of youth and health coursing like a courser along his veins, to look upon so much beauty unmoved? "Ah! too well I know your answer. To my fate I meekly bow." I succumbed. "It is my destiny," I said, "and destiny who shall resist?"

My father, Josiah Grammot, is a wealthy farmer. Being an only son, the paternal Grammot wishes me to remain at home, get married as soon as possible, and settle down. Sister Meg, of course, would soon be married; for, being a Grammot, you know, it was impossible for her to be anything but handsome, witty, agreeable and affectionate. All the Grammots, so far back as we know anything of them, have all possessed the above-mentioned good qualities and personal attractions. Even I, your humble servant, Amariah Grammot, am noted for my good looks, my amiable disposition, and my high moral character.

Of course, as my father entertained such hopes in regard to me, he could not but look kindly upon the fair Lorenca. Possessing excellent good sense, and a great deal of discernment, it was easy for him to see how all things were working toward a grand and glorious consummation.

I saw it, too—I felt it in my heart of hearts. O what a happy summer we passed! Methinks there is more exquisite happiness in loving, as I did then, when you are not positively sure that your passion is returned. The beautiful woman whom you love, but of whose feelings you are rather doubtful, makes a peculiarly pleasant study. Like reading a novel, after you learn the plot, the book loses its greatest interest and its principal charm. Not but that it is very sweet to know that we are beloved; but isn't the doubt excruciatingly blissful? I thought so, at least; and it was for that very reason that I delayed as long as possible to break the pleasing spell. I luxuriated in the doubt, though feeling at the same time a strong desire to bet ten to one upon the result.

But all earthly things must come to an end. Angels' visits, I believe, generally have a termination; and Lorenca's visit (she was an angel, though on a rather large scale,) at last reached its *finale*. She must go back to school. Only one term more, and then she would be free.

It was the last evening before her depart-

ure. The moon shone brightly, the stars twinkled gayly, and the crickets chirped in the meadows. I've noticed in books, that lovers generally choose such nights to declare their passions. I did the same. Lorenca took my arm, and we walked down through the grove, listening to the glad song of the mosquitos warbling their evening lays.

"How beautiful!" I exclaimed, in tones of rapture.

"Yes, very," Lorenca answered, looking straight at my nose, though whether she had any reference to my nasal organ or not, history does not state.

"Lorenca," I began, in a voice choked with emotion, "to-morrow we part!"

She sobbed, and just then a great tear came splashing down her face, and striking one side of my nose, came very near washing my mustache away.

"I shall be very unhappy when thou art gone, Lorenca."

(Sob No. 2.)

"I shall miss thee, I shall miss the soft light of thine eyes, the sweet music of thy voice, thy sunny smiles and thy dear companionship."

(Several heavy sobs washed with dewy tears. Very fine raw on the half shell.)

"Lorenca, darling!" I cried, clasping her to my patient palpitating bosom, "I have learned to love thee in these happy weeks. I have basked in thy smiles—my ears have drank in the melody of thy voice. Ah! darling! dearest Lorenca! I love thee better than all the world beside!"

"O, Am—am—a—riah—riah—riah!" she sobbed. "I—I—I—"

"You do love me, darling?"

"Ye—ye—yes, I d—d—do!" she answered, between her sobs.

I pressed her to my bosom once again, and attempted to kiss the tears away. Ah, as well might I have begun at the Mississippi's delta to kiss that river dry. Those tears (they were tears of joy, of course,) came rushing down upon me, very much, I suspect, as did the waters of the Red Sea upon Pharaoh and his host. But I survived, and what is quite as strange, Lorenca did too. But our parting was terrible in the extreme. I cannot describe it. Had a short-hand reporter been upon the ground at the time, I presume he might have done the subject justice. But for my own part, I was so overwhelmed with the thought

that I was about to lose my darling, that I retain but a confused recollection of what transpired. I only know that we parted; Lorenca went back to school, and I was left alone in my misery.

How my heart ached when she was gone, those who have "loved and lost" can tell. "My peaceful home had no charms for me." I lived upon hope and Lorenca's letters; and, between you and me, my gentle reader, I found neither one *very* nutritious. I grew very thin and pale. Father noticed it and was alarmed. He recommended a change of scene, and as my uncle, Amos Grammot, was very anxious that I should visit him in the city, I did so now.

Uncle Amos was pleased to see me, and he did all in his power to make my visit pleasant; and I confess to being moderately happy while there, considering that my beloved Lorenca was so far away.

I was in the habit, while in the city, of visiting the public library nearly every day. In fact, hardly a day passed over my head that I did not spend several hours in the reading-room. After a time I began to recognize others who were as constant in their attendance at the library as myself. One old gentleman, in particular, interested me more than all the others. I had always found him there when I went in, and left him there when I went away. He seemed to take but little interest in those around, but kept his eyes intently fixed upon the book before him, hardly ever raising them, except it was to take a pinch of snuff, of which I discovered he was more than ordinarily fond. He might have been fifty years of age, or over, of medium size, and rather inclined to corpulency. His hair was slightly gray, eyes large and blue, nose aquiline, mouth rather broad with very firm lips, though much inclined to curl into a smile.

He always appeared dressed in a suit of dark gray cloth from head to foot, and wore a very glossy black beaver upon his head, and a heavy gold chain across his vest. Besides, I noticed a massive gold ring upon his finger, which from the brilliancy of the stone I took for a diamond. To all appearance he was a gentleman, and probably moderately well off in the world.

Perhaps it was a fortnight after I had first noticed him in the library, that I met him on the street. He was smoking a cigar and walking leisurely along, swinging

a heavy gold-headed cane. I bowed and touched my hat, and he saluted me in return. An hour after that I met him again at the library. He saw me when I came in, and leaving his chair, he came over and took a seat beside me, and we entered into conversation.

We discussed several questions to our heart's content, when suddenly the gentleman turned upon me with the question:

"Do you know the Grammots, of C—?"

"Certainly, sir," I replied. "That is my native town, and in fact, I am a Grammot."

"I was sure of it—sure of it," the old gentleman cried. "You are Josiah Grammot's son."

"The very same."

"Why, bless you, boy, I knew your father well—went to school with him, in fact. Didn't he ever tell you anything about his old friend, Abel Chilcott?"

"Of course he has, many a time; and often I have heard him express the wish that he might see you again," I replied.

"To be sure, to be sure; and here I've been talking of going down to C— for the last ten years. Why only a day or two ago, I was speaking to my wife about Josiah—she knew him well. Your father will remember her. She was an Overton—old Captain Overton's daughter—used to live in that old red house over 'tother side of Muggins Hill. Well, well, how times have changed! I've changed, too—have been most all over the world, since I was in C—. Josiah's been prospered, of course, nothing to hinder, with half of the Grammot property for his own. I hadn't anything to commence life with. Had to begin alone and take all the hard knocks and give 'em back, too. Well, well, well, and so you are Josiah's son? Are you the only child?"

"I have one sister, sir."

"Ah, indeed?" And so the old gentleman kept rattling on for half an hour. When I arose to go, he invited me to call upon him at his house.

"You must come up, my boy, I want to have a good long talk with you."

I promised to do so, and not only made the promise good, but finding my visits so agreeable, I spent at least three evenings a week at his house.

In this way two months passed swiftly by. About that time I received a letter from my dear Lorenca, saying that as soon

as the school should close, she should hurry home where she intended to stop a week, and then she should go to C—— to visit my sister. There was only one thing that seemed to trouble the dear creature, and that was the fear that her father, who it seems was a very "stern parent," might put a stop to our correspondence, as up to that time none of her family knew anything of it.

We had neither of us thought of this before, or at least if I had, I supposed that by going to the paternal Pennoyer and stating our case, he would at once give his consent to our union. But I did not let this trouble me a great deal, for about this time something arose that gave me plenty of food for thought.

You see, Mr. Chilcott and his wife had grown very fond of me from some reason or other. My uncle hinted to me that my father had been a lover of Mrs. Chilcott's in the days of her girlhood, but whether that had anything to do with that lady's interest in my welfare, I know not. I only know that it became very distasteful to me being carried to such an extent, for, will you believe it? Mr. and Mrs. Chilcott had put their heads together and selected a wife for me!

I cannot undertake to describe my feelings when Mr. Chilcott first introduced the subject. I was completely stunned.

"Why, my dear sir, I am engaged!" I cried.

"Fudge!"

"I am a man of honor, Mr. Chilcott."

"Not another girl like her in the world, boy! Sweet, sensible, handsome, agreeable, affectionate—everything in fact, that a man needs in a wife. I tell you, my boy, my niece Ren is a perfect jewel!"

"I haven't the slightest doubt of it, my dear sir; but you see it is impossible!"

"Fudge!"

"You are unreasonable, Mr. Chilcott."

"Not a bit of it. You haven't seen her—my Ren. She's coming to-day. Call up this evening, boy. This rushing headlong into matrimony, sir, with an ordinary woman, when my Ren is to be had for the

asking, is altogether unreasonable. I want she should have a good husband, and you are just the man for her. I don't know of another young man that I would recommend to her, and 'pon honor, she's the only girl I could recommend to you. I shall expect you up this evening. I only want you to see her, and I'll go bail for the rest. Now don't disappoint me;" and Mr. Chilcott turned on his heel and left the library.

After thinking the matter over deliberately, I concluded to go. It was to be my last night in the city, and I felt secure against all the arts a woman could bring to bear against me in one evening. "Of course she can't compare with my dear Lorenca," I said.

Ah, how the thought of her thrilled my soul! I had not seen her for three months, but still my heart beat just as warm and true as ever. That evening I called upon Mr. Chilcott. That gentleman answered the bell in person, and ushered me into the parlor. Mrs. Chilcott greeted me, and then I turned towards the sofa, where I had caught just a glimpse of a young lady reclining, as I entered the room.

I heard my name called. Ah! could I mistake that voice?

"Am I dreaming?" I cried. "No, no, those eyes! that nose! those pearls and rubies! It is, it is my Lorenca!"

We fell into each other's arms.

"Why, what the deuce—" cried Mr. Chilcott. "I thought you were engaged?"

"And so I am, my dear sir; and this is the lady, whom I have sworn to love."

"What, our Ren?"

"Yes, your Ren," the dear creature answered.

"Bless my stars, Mrs. Chilcott, we shan't make the match, after all!"

"Well, but you can help us," I said.

"How, my dear boy?"

"Obtain Mr. Pennoyer's consent to our marriage."

"Of course, I will;" and of course he did, for just six weeks from that day, I led the beautiful, magnificent, dazzling, stunning and blushing Lorenca Pennoyer to the altar, and we twain were made one flesh.

## OUT FROM THE SHADOW.

GRAHME

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### OUT FROM THE SHADOW.

BY GRAHME.

"THE pathway of most every one in life has its light and its shadow. To some the light is brighter and longer, while to others the shadow is deeper and less transient."

The speaker was a girl just budding into womanhood, that period of existence when the darker side of things is but rarely thought of, and hardly ever considered of sufficient importance to cause mention. Yet here was Marian Graves, beautiful and cultured, surrounded by friends affectionate and earnest in their affection, the idol of parents able and desirous of supplying every want, communing within herself, and with mournful accent giving expression to saddening thoughts.

"Marian," spoke a sweet voice, and ere the echo died a kiss was pressed on Mari-

an's brow. "Marian dear, the shadow needs to be dispelled by light; only think of life as a grand opportunity allowed by the Creator to make the paths of others pleasant."

"Yes, I know, Aunt Mary, but it is hard to dispel the shadow oppressing another when one's own grows deeper."

"Marian, something must have happened to have caused this despondent mood; what is it? You are so different from what you were a few weeks since, when I left you to visit my old home in New England."

"O aunt," said Marian, "'tis but a moment of reflection that will soon pass away. You know that every one is at times serious."

Aunt Mary retired from the room, but she

was far from knowing the cause of Marian's dejection, and yet was puzzled because she was usually light-hearted, and had never been obliged to face unaided the realities of life. One short month previous to this time Marian had gone to the home of her maiden aunt Alice Graves, her father's sister, who owned the Graves homestead, near the village of Franklin. The homestead consisted of a comfortable-looking old-fashioned residence, with numerous trumpet honeysuckles reaching their long vines over porch and gable, and crowning all with leaves and flowers; an outbuilding used as barn, workshop, and a receptacle for every stray thing found; and a few acres of land yielding just sufficient to pay the interest upon the money required to give the premises a respectable appearance.

Alice Graves, however, cared more for the view of field and forest, more for the recollections clustering around the old farmhouse, more for the swiftly-running stream, the Sweetwater, that had been her confidant in her girlhood, and now, in her middle age, seemed to welcome her as royally whenever she graced its banks with her presence. Yes, she cared more for these *than she did for the vegetables and fruits* her few acres yielded. Of her relatives, Marian was the favorite, and received frequent invitations to visit the homestead.

Shortly after her arrival Marian received as a present from her father a pony, one of those nervous excitable animals that seem to be nothing but nerve and spirit, without being vicious. Seated upon his back, Marian visited many places in the neighborhood, and always rode with such evident enjoyment, into the *spirit of which the pony entered*, that both came to be looked for with pleasure from the open doors of many homes. Marian had been at her aunt's three weeks, and had only one more week to remain, into which she had determined to infuse as much enjoyment and pleasurable exercise as she and the pony were capable of.

One September morning, when the air was pure and bracing, a morning when the highest physical pleasure consisted in simply breathing, Marian rode slowly down the gravelled road, through the open gate, out upon the highway, and in the direction of the bridge spanning the Sweetwater. *This route Marian had not taken in some time*, and now it was doubtful if she was con-

scious of the direction in which she was going. The reins hung loosely on the pony's neck, and Marian seemed to be employing her thoughts in a reverie. Along the highway they went, and now the long narrow bridge without railing appears to view. Steadily on walks the pony. Ah, Marian, it must be something pleasant indeed that shuts your thoughts from outward objects! Can you not see that the bridge is near, and that it is unsafe? No? But on she rides unheedingly. Now the bridge is reached, and still Marian moves not a hand to grasp a rein. She marks not the narrowness of the bridge, nor the absence of a protecting railing. On, still on. Now they are half way over. But wait! The pony has placed a hoof upon a defective plank. It cracks, it bends, it breaks! Pony partially falls, but quickly recovers. Marian wakes. Too late! For the now terrified animal quickly rears, and plunges off the bridge into the swiftly-running stream.

Both horse and rider sank beneath the surface. When they reappeared Marian had lost her seat, and was tenaciously clinging to the saddle; but the frequent plunging of the frightened beast, and Marian's failing strength, released her grasp, and, entangled in the folds of her long riding-dress, she sank, with one wild cry for help. The cry attracted the attention of a young man at work in an adjoining field. Hastening to the river's bank, regardless of personal considerations, he sprang into the water, and, swimming towards the centre of the stream, perceived an object floating with the current. This proved to be Marian.

Firmly grasping the now insensible girl, he endeavored to stem the swift current, but more than once became exhausted, and realized that he was jeopardizing his own life to save one whom he did not know, but whose pale beautiful face resting upon his arm, somehow touched the deepest sympathy of his nature. After severe exertion he reached the shore, and hastily carried his burden to the nearest farmhouse, where willing and sympathetic hands soon brought back to life the unconscious girl.

Gratitude was one of the strong elements in Marian's character, and her first inquiry was as to the manner of her rescue, and of him who had perilled his own life to save hers. But James Brown, as soon as he had ascertained that Marian was out of danger, had gone to his home. A lesser man would

have waited and received the thankful offering, and endeavored to have laid the foundation for either future acquaintance, or favor, or presumption. James Brown, however, had a sensitive nature, and although but a farm laborer, obliged to work from the twilight of morning to that of evening, yet he shrank from receiving publicly an avowal of gratitude. To him there was something sacred in the giving thanks for willing service done, for did not thereby two lives meet and mingle that might never meet again, and yet both be shaped immeasurably in the many years of the future by the service rendered, and by the moment's interchange of thought and grateful expression? James Brown, although of humble origin, had been possessed since his early youth with a desire to acquire knowledge and better his condition. He had economized and invested in books as much as possible, and after his day's work was done, long after the family had retired to rest, he studied, analyzed and acquired.

The following day Marian expressed her thanks in a note delicately and gratefully worded. This James carefully treasured, without answering, hoping one day to attain a social position when the writer's friendship could be claimed without presumption.

It was the day before the one when Marian was to depart for her own home. All the morning she had remained in the house conversing with her aunt, and now and then occupying her thoughts with her narrow escape the few days before, and in reflections about him to whom she had written thanks. Marian had ascertained who he was, and from the information gathered conceived his true character, and desired to meet him the more for the purpose of showing by delicate action rather than words that she considered him worthy of the acquaintance and friendship of any true woman.

Fate was propitious. In the afternoon Marian concluded to take a last ride. So pony, who had escaped unharmed, was saddled and bridled, and cantered away with his lovely burden. There was a place in the forest Marian loved particularly to visit; where the undergrowth had interlaced, and, covered by wild vines with their luxuriant foliage, formed an arbor "fit for the muses." Thither Marian went, and as she was about to dismount, perceived that her favorite place was occupied. During the

moment of hesitation the person arose and approached. In him, from her aunt's description, Marian recognized her preserver. She saw before her a young man about twenty-two years of age, with bright eyes and shapely features, an intellectual expression crowning all. He was neatly though plainly clad. Bowing, Marian said:

"Mr. Brown, I believe?"

Politely raising his hat, without awkwardness and with a smile, he said:

"Miss Graves, I perceive that this arbor, formed without the assistance of art, has other admirers than myself."

"Yes," replied Marian, pleasantly, "I have passed many hours happily here, and regard it as one of the friends I have made. Indeed, about leaving, I could not go without bidding it, with the others, a last goodbye, and express to it and them my gratefulness for the pleasure they have given, as well as"—and Marian's voice trembled with emotion—"for the self-sacrificing acts that have prevented sorrow from reaching the hearts of those who assemble around the fireside at home."

"Miss Graves,"—and the deep pure voice was expressive of feeling—"it is indeed pleasurable to be thus distinguished in your thoughts. Allow me to accept your expressions of gratitude, and say that the occasion giving rise to them is slight indeed as compared with your favorable recognition."

James bowed, turned, and was soon lost to view in the forest. Marian perceived that here was one whom no occupation nor surroundings could make inferior. He rose above them. There was an indefinite, indescribable nobility about him that engaged Marian's attention, and caused her to form the wish that other and more favorable circumstances existed making a further and intimate acquaintance possible. The more she thought the more extensive were her wishes, until her daydreams had for their central figure James Brown, becoming with each succeeding day more and more idealized. As after light comes darkness, so frequently after each dissolving view Marian was shadowed by a feeling of sadness resulting from the thought that "it might have been."

And now, at her luxurious home in the city of Fairbridge, in answer to Aunt Mary's suggestion, she is saying that "it is hard to dispel the shadow oppressing another when



one's own grows deeper." The possible was to her, as to others, more attractive than the actual, and the disappointment of the present clouded the possibilities of the future.

Another year passed, but James Brown was not forgotten. Marian had often desired to write to Aunt Alice and ask concerning him, but maidenly pride intervened and prevented. Now, however, she accepted her aunt's invitation to visit Franklin with eagerness, yet fearing to meet him lest he should appear inferior to the ideal her thoughts had formed. Several days passed before an opportunity occurred for Marian to satisfy her eager curiosity, and then suddenly Aunt Alice said, in the manner of one who had intended to speak before, but had forgotten, and now spoke hastily for fear of forgetting again:

"O Marian, have you ever heard of the young man who saved your life last summer—Mr. Brown?"

"No, I have not," Marian replied. "Is he here now?"

"No," said Aunt Alice, "he is not. There is something very peculiar about him. A few days after you went last year he disappeared, and no one has heard from him since. I thought perhaps he had gone to the city, where you possibly might have met him."

Marian did not continue the conversation. The real object of her visit had been accomplished. He had disappeared. No one knew of him. No one had heard from him. She would never see him again. Yes, indeed, were her half-formed hopes the veriest phantasms.

Two years more had rolled on with their many changes. Marian had developed into a superior woman. Always beautiful, now her beauty in its full unfolding was softened and winning. Hers was not of that imperious character that for the moment allures, and even for a time may retain, but eventually loses. Her beauty won not merely admiration, but devotion heartfelt and lasting.

Now, as she accompanies her father to witness the commencement exercises of the college of Oakgrove, it can be truthfully said of her, that she has unfolded with the years, having the shade of disappointment resting upon her. A great number have assembled to hear the graduating exercises. All the morning people have been coming.

This to them is the day of days of the whole year; and year after year the same people come and listen, without comprehension, to about the same salutatory in Latin, and smirk and nod to each other their approbation, and look as knowingly as though they had in the days of old trod the Applan Way, or scaled the Tarpeian rock.

Most of the orations were not different from those usually given, either composed of the refuse of the graduate's imagination, or for the most part showing the workmanship of the professor of rhetoric and elocution.

At last the gray-haired president announced—"James Browning"—speaking the last syllable of the surname with the falling inflection, causing Marian to half arise and nervously repeat to herself, "James Brown?" The next moment, however, she perceived her mistake. The president said, "Subject—Human character, with the valedictory, by James Browning."

Marian sank back to her seat. But the orator's voice sounded familiar. And there was a resemblance in his features to those that had so long dwelt in her memory. Possibly, James Brown might have looked thus had he been moulded, developed, and deified by years of feeling and reflection. Yet the name was different. "No! No! it cannot be," thought Marian, and yet that voice, so expressive of subdued feeling, reminded her of him. And once Marian thought, perhaps without cause, that the speaker perceived her, half hesitated, and then spoke on with greater strength and more passionate utterance. After the farewell had been spoken sadly and impressively to instructors and classmates, and at the close of the valedictory, a perfect storm of bouquets evinced the enthusiasm that the powerful and eloquent effort had occasioned. Perhaps it was intended, but it was certainly strange that the valedictorian should have stooped and selected from the numerous bouquets, one of white rosebuds and English violets, that Marian had thrown. Pressing it tenderly to his lips, with his eyes resting upon her he bowed in a graceful and dignified manner, and retired from the stage.

Marian trembled. Was hope long deferred to be realized? Would this talented and cultured gentleman seek her out? And in him would she find the one whose every

word spoken in the arbor in the forest, she had treasured in her memory?

But the last word of the closing address to the graduates has been spoken by the aged president; the people are dispersing, and she sees many hands offered to James Browning. Why can she not offer hers in congratulation, and evince pleasure openly in his triumph? But he does not look in her direction, neither does he approach, and Marian passes out of the door with one lingering backward glance. It seemed to James Browning that thus she passed out of his life, leaving upon him a shadow.

Two years more have rolled on with their additional changes. With these years also Marian has grown. She has cultured her taste for art, and has had her landscapes, as well as her ideal creations, worked in oil, both admired and coveted. Her beauty undimmed has been heightened by a higher refinement. And as she stands at the open window looking out upon the flowers and trees, now at the clouds and sky, it must be affirmed that it is the divinest of womanly graces to remain pure, and become cultured, with hopes and wishes unfulfilled. Recently her father has become involved in litigation, in which the greater part of his property is at stake. He and Marian have come to the city of Woodland to be present at the trial of the cause. Now she turns from the open window, from the fields and flowers, and arm in arm with her father proceeds to the courtroom, where the decision is to be rendered, either that they retain their large landed property or be reduced to comparative poverty. But let come what may, Marian, with her great heart, will cheer and bless her father, and will meet misfortune face to face with that same sad yet beautiful smile.

The judge proceeds to call the calendar: "The first case to be taken up is that of John Bronson, versus Theodore Graves; attorneys for the plaintiff are Messrs. Thompson and Skates; for the defendant, Rice, Smith and Browning." The counsel for the plaintiff announce themselves as ready for trial. Mr. Rice, leading counsel for the defendant, states that Mr. Smith is unable to be present, and that he himself is imperatively obliged to be absent from town for several days, and asks as a favor that the case be continued until the following term. This is refused; a jury is impanelled, and the case goes on, with no one repre-

senting the defendant but the junior counsel, a Mr. Browning, but just admitted to the bar. The attorneys for the plaintiff are jubilant. They suppose that with a young and inexperienced lawyer opposed to them they will have no difficulty in winning the case.

But their confidence becomes slightly lessened after the cross examination of their first witness, for the young attorney has, by wonderful shrewdness and persuasiveness in the questioning, destroyed the entire effect of the direct examination, and his knowledge of the case becoming more and more apparent, as the testimony of each witness is thus sifted, creates astonishment the greater that the confidence previously exhibited had been caused by a feeling of contempt for him as an opponent. The trial lasted three days.

When Browning made his speech for the defence, then, indeed, did they recognize his power. In a close and searching manner he analyzed the testimony, and by terse and pointed expression exhibited its worth or worthlessness. In the presentation of the principles applicable to the facts, he evinced a knowledge and research complete and convincing, and rising to the higher considerations of right and justice, he appealed to the deepest and finest feeling; in language eloquent and impressive, causing the heart of each juror to beat in advocacy of the cause so warmly defended. Mr. Thompson closed the argument for the plaintiff, making, however, but a slight impression. The jury, after an absence of a few moments, returned a verdict in favor of the defendant, Theodore Graves. Mr. Graves grasped his advocate's hand, but speech came slowly. His gratitude was overpowering. At last he said:

"Mr. Browning, I cannot thank you now as I would wish, but believe me, that you have done a work to-day that merits the greatest praise, and will ever be remembered by me with thankfulness."

He insisted that the young man should accompany him to the hotel where he and his daughter were stopping.

Marian, in accordance with her father's request, had remained away from the courtroom during most of the trial, and as yet had not noticed Mr. Browning particularly. The door to the room where she was sitting opened. She heard her father's voice gladly saying, "Marian, we have won."

She turned, and beheld with her father, James Browning, the valedictorian at Oak Grove two years before. With amazement she listened.

"Marian, this is Mr. Browning, through whose skill and ability our property has been preserved to us."

She approached, extended her hand, and said, O, how winningly, "Mr. Browning, you are welcome."

When he retired from the presence of father and daughter it was with an earnest invitation from both to continue the acquaintance so favorably begun.

Theodore Graves concluded to make his home at Woodland, as there were centered nearly all of his business interests, and at his residence James Browning has become a frequent visitor, respected by the father and viewed with a far more tender affection by the daughter. All the thoughts and hopes of two years before have come back with added force. In many ways she has been persuaded that James Browning was known to her in the past. Certainly, the name was different, and the appearance unlike, but, as in the man we detect the youth with whom we were formerly acquainted by a resemblance we perceive but cannot express, so Marian gradually became convinced that James Brown and James Browning were one. With her now it was not a hope but a certainty. She made no immediate allusions, however, to her belief, but determined to express her remembrance of the past in language delicate and suggestive, the language of art. Resuming the brush, for a long time unused, she was occupied for several weeks in her studies. One evening James Browning called and was invited into the drawing-room where Marian was sitting. During the past few weeks he had been very attentive to her, and had become more and more interested; but her manner toward him, though kind and pleasant, seemed to be preoccupied, and he began to feel that she entertained him principally on account of her gratitude for his exertion in her father's behalf, while her thoughts were far away. "Can it be," he wondered, "that another has won her? Are all these long years of hardship and struggling for position to win no reward?"

Although becoming hopeless he continued his visits, her smile of greeting each time causing him to hope anew. To-night, however, in a kind, almost affectionate manner,

she greeted him. James at once became light-hearted, and his eyes beamed upon her with the affection of which, in her heart, Marian was proud. During the day a new ornament had been placed upon the wall. An oil painting, with a frame of rosewood having an inner lining of gilt.

After Marian's greeting, as James turned to a seat he perceived the painting, and with the remark, "Something new?" stepped nearer. Why does he start so visibly? And behold! his face expresses great astonishment. Does the painting work this result? Marian, also, with her head inclined slightly forward, tremblingly covers her eyes with her hand. Is this also produced by the picture? James sees represented before him a stream, spanned by a long narrow bridge, unprotected by a railing. What is that just below, floating with the current? It is—no? yes! It is a horse, and clinging to the saddle, being partially submerged, is a woman, her face turned away from the observer. But what occasions the excitement that James strives with only partial success to suppress? Ah! he is looking at the figure of the youth hastening down the river's bank. Nearer to the painting he bends. Yes, the face resembles his. It is as he looked five years before. The artist must have had the features continually in her memory to have been able to represent them so accurately. James reads the title, "To the rescue," and enclosed in brackets the words, "A thank-offering."

He looks from the painting. His face is illumined with the knowledge that the past has not been forgotten, and that *she* has thought continually of him. He turns, half fearing to find her gone. But no, there she sits with her eyes shaded. He pauses a moment and asks himself, "Is this real?" What a change, indeed, five years have made. She moves not.

"Marian," said he, tenderly.

"Marian," he repeated, moving forward.

No answer, but the shapely head inclines further, and the trembling becomes more noticeable. Placing his hand gently upon her shoulder, he continues:

"Marian, I thank you. It is the greatest pleasure to know that since we met in the forest bordering the Sweetwater, you have made me, to some extent, the subject of your thoughts. Then I was called James Brown through an unrectified mistake of

the family with whom I was living. Even then I dared to hope one day to be esteemed by you as an equal. Three years after I saw you at Oak Grove. O, how I hoped to be recognized; but you departed, leaving upon me a shadow. Marian, I have labored, studied and surmounted many difficulties, to become worthy of you. Your dear face has ever beckoned me on with its beaming. Marian dear, I have loved you through all these years. I love you still, and will unchangeably. Will you not crown my hope with a happy and glorious fulfilment? Will

you not dispel my shadow with the light of your preformment?"

She raises her face suffused with blushes, and with her eyes joyously sparkling amid their setting of tears, lays her hand softly in his.

"James," she says, "we both have waited, and improved in the waiting, although shadowed by disappointment. We both have suffered from hopes unrealized. But now happy in each other's regard we both can repeat, "Out from the shadow we have come."

## PHILIP AND LOUISE.

BY HESTER C. LAUREATE.

THE names given in the title of this story are cut in the stone walls of a room in an old building in France, which was once the property of Cardinal Mazarin—The story runs thus:

It was a cold and cheerless night during the regency of Anne of Austria. It was wet, too; so wet, that the garments of a man who was passing through the gardens of the Palais Royal, had become thoroughly saturated.

He made his way hastily, nor slackened his speed until he reached a gate, the key of which he had lost, or forgotten. After a vain search he uttered an exclamation of surprise or dismay.

The situation was, indeed, an unpleasant one, for the path he had traversed led only to the apartments of the queen-mother, Anne of Austria, and the hour was an unreasonable one. Moreover, he could only enter his own apartments through this gate, for the man shivering with cold and fear, was the wily statesman, Cardinal Mazarin. For some time he walked back and forth, in sheer vexation, and then was forced by extreme cold to attempt climbing the high fence with iron railings, that seemed to defy his efforts to reach the haven he sought. It was just possible he might do this without disturbing the guard, who were stationed at either end of the fence.

But accustomed as he was to political climbing, he was in this case destined to ignominious failure, for his cardinal's robe caught an iron point, just as he thought himself safely over, and he could only call lustily for help.

This adventure of the cardinal was first whispered in the saloons, and then spoken boldly of, by the young count Philip de Villeneuve, who was a gentleman of great wealth and very handsome. He had lived a somewhat gay and reckless life, was admired by Queen Anne, and was a favorite at court. The antiquarian Delarue asserts that the queen-mother was at that time secretly married to Mazarin, who feared and was jealous of, the young count, and had long been seeking some way to effect his ruin. Now he was resolved. Fear and

jealousy had become bitter hatred, and on a charge of treason Philip was imprisoned.

He was not long, however, in making his escape, and astonished the lords and ladies of the court, by appearing among them in velvet doublet, gold fringe, and point lace, entertaining all within his circle, by relating his experience as a prisoner, until the entrance of the lord cardinal, when he was again arrested, and taken back to his cell.

Again the count escaped from his hated prison, and again appeared among his friends in court dress, which news was immediately carried to the cardinal. Before the evening had ended, and while he was conversing with Clara de Hautefort, the guards led him from the brilliant saloon, and placed him, manacled and blindfolded, in a close carriage, so that the gay courtier had no idea where they were taking him; but knew by the distance that it must be far away from the Bastille, the gay court he loved so well, and the fair-haired Anne of Austria, whose vanity he had flattered by his boyish devotion, but whose displeasure he had incurred, by an unfortunate and ill-timed plesantry. At length the horses slackened their pace, and leaving the carriage, the guards took the prisoner through long and winding passages, keeping him blindfolded, until within the room which was henceforth to be his prison. This room was low and long. The stone walls formed an arch overhead, and the windows were barred and double barred; while everything around was mouldy and fast going to decay.

Before the sense of bewilderment had passed away, his jailor came hobbling over the stones on crutches, for he was lame, and had but one arm.

"Why am I here?" the count asked, looking gloomily around. "The Bastille was better than this."

"It is for the cardinal's pleasure, that young nobles are sent here; you need not ask me why. How should I know, indeed? My orders are, that between us, Louise and I, we keep you safe from all harm, allowing you no opportunity of making your escape under penalty of death, do you hear? Death! Should Count Philip de Villeneuve

escape us, we are both to be put to death. No hat and cloak floating in the water below, no figure placed upon yonder bed will save us; for should you escape by stratagem from this place, your jailors are to be hanged in the courtyard below."

*Louise and I!*

"Louise!" repeated the young nobleman. "Who is Louise?"

"My daughter. I am too lame to go back and forth all day long. Louise will be your keeper; so, while I keep guard at the entrance, Louise will be in this passage, and will attend you faithfully. Never fear, she will guard you carefully, for—she had orders from the lord cardinal."

"Is she young?" the prisoner asked.

"Yes, young enough; twenty or thereabouts; mayhap you'll fall in love with her."

The count observed a sarcastic smile upon the father's ghastly countenance, as he went hobbling away through the long passage.

The remark was a cruel one, for a father to make concerning an unfortunate child; but disappointment had made him bitter, for he had once hoped great things from the great beauty of Louise's face.

"Young, twenty or thereabouts," mused the prisoner. "Not a bad idea. I will fall in love with her—apparently, and then she will find some means to effect my escape, for it is only by strategy that I can hope to escape from this place. They will be vigilant, if their life depends on my being kept here. Yes, I will fall in love with this girl. She need not be hanged for it, either; for, if she liberates me, I can take her away from here, and provide for her handsomely; there is an old place of mine—"

Here his meditations were interrupted by the turning of a key. The door slowly opened, and what did he see? deformity in its most hideous aspect—dwarfed deformity.

Was this the daughter—and had the father made a cruel jest of her misfortune? Love, or even the semblance of it, in connection with such an object, filled his soul with a shuddering horror. When he had sufficiently overcome this feeling he looked again; this time into the face of his strange jailor. Any of the court beauties would have given all the wealth they possessed for such beauty as the count looked upon for the first time.

A complexion of wonderful purity and fairness, an abundance of hair falling in

soft masses upon the bent shoulders; eyes large and lustrous; features as regular as though chiselled from marble, and an expression which changed rapidly from sympathy to sarcasm, as the prisoner, forgetful of all else, studied her face. At length she spoke:

"The Count Philip de Villeneuve was not aware that the cardinal is a collector of curiosities. I am a specimen—Louise Bertole, at your service."

Her voice was so singularly sweet, her pronunciation so perfect, that the count could not but answer her respectfully, notwithstanding the sarcasm hidden beneath its sweetness.

"I beg pardon, Louise, if my steady gaze has offended; but I am so much bewildered, and everything seems so strange, that I fear I have forgotten the manners becoming a gentleman."

"There will be no need to remember them here," she said, sadly; "you will see no one but my father and myself. I came to bring you bread."

She had answered with such gentle dignity that he was at a loss for words, and he commenced eating the bread she had brought him, looking down upon it, while she in her turn studied his face.

Then she brought him water to drink, and left him to his musings, which were of a different nature than before her coming.

Had this gay courtier heart enough to abandon the project he had formed, of gaining his liberty through the love he should awaken in the heart of one whom he had imagined to be as beautiful in form as in features; when, instead of the ideal he had formed, he saw an object of pity, and from which a man would naturally shrink?

He had lived a gay dissolute life, and his heart was not one to be touched easily, but his plans were disconcerted. It would not be easy, even could he conquer the aversion he felt, to make this girl believe that he was even interested in her, for in this one interview he comprehended the character with which he had to deal. To such sensitiveness as is ever the portion of unfortunate beings like Louise Bertole, was added the sarcasm taught her by bitter experience. She had lived her life alone. Years ago, when she was a child, other children had shrank from the caresses she would have lavished upon them, and her father had not been able to love her, as he had

loved the perfect children whose lives had not been spared to him.

"It will take time," he thought; "but this girl must love me. I can see no other way of obtaining my freedom."

Gradually he gained the confidence of Louise, and learned that the place in which he was imprisoned was a house belonging to Mazarin, and was a kind of prison, where the cardinal confined his own personal enemies, or more properly speaking, those courtiers he hated for some real or supposed influence which they had over the queen-mother.

At length the prisoner reproached his keeper with being harsh and unkind to him, as she was at times, the manner having become habitual to her; but in her heart there was all kindness toward the young and handsome nobleman.

"You should not treat me unkindly, Louise," he said, "because others have failed to understand the beauty of your soul." And so with gentle tender words he melted the ice which was an outer covering only of the deformed girl's heart. Beneath it her heart beat with generous impulses, and true womanly feeling. Still, the approach to the love he had determined on was slow, so slow that when months had passed, he had no longer the desire to win it as a means of obtaining freedom.

In Louise he had found a companion. Her clear subtle intellect had for him a sort of fascination. She had all her life treasured up poetry and romance; had mastered more of science than his idle life had given him time to do. The loneliness of the prison had become something of the past; the courtier had become a student, the cell a library; for he was not without money from his own estates, and Louise could readily get for him whatever he wished from Paris. He had forgotten to think of her as a repulsive being, as day by day the beauty of her mind revealed itself.

She learned her power, and in this sweet companionship, his mind soared above the selfishness which had dwarfed it. In this strange friendship he had found rest, and awaited patiently for the time when his persecutors should be induced, through the persuasions of his friends, to liberate him.

To Louise this companionship had opened a new world and her love became devotion. Anxiously she watched the fading color, and saw the face which was to her as the

face of an angel, grow thin and colorless.

The room, with low arches and stone walls, was dark and damp; Philip had been accustomed to sunshine, warmth and liberty, until he was so unfortunate as to incur the cardinal's displeasure.

The bread Louise brought him was hardly tasted, and she often contrived to elude the vigilance of the old soldier her father, and carry to Philip's cell delicacies she had prepared. But all seemed of no avail, and he became so sad that even Louise's smiles failed to cheer him. As his strength failed, she nursed him more tenderly, but the fever in his veins was not to be thus destroyed.

"Philip, dear Philip," she said, clasping her small hands in anguish, "you will die here;" then added slowly and distinctly—"you must go away!"

Her tender thoughtfulness, together with a prospect of freedom, invigorated him so much that the color came into his face, and the light to his eyes. Then, as the impossibility of this presented itself to his mind, he sobbed aloud.

"No, Louise, it is quite impossible!" he answered, at length.

"Nothing is impossible to those who are determined," she said; and so left him to wonder at her courage and devotion.

The following evening Louise opened the door, saying, "Philip you must follow me."

He followed her through passage after passage, as one in a dream, until at length they stood beneath the canopy which is at night studded with stars. It was to him as a glimpse of heaven, and the air seemed to cool the fever in his veins. After breathing it in silence for a few moments, he said, giving a sigh of relief:

"Now, my sweet friend and comforter, I am ready to go in; back to my prison cell. I shall be better for this."

"Back, Philip!" she exclaimed, "when I have everything planned for your escape? No! Go and be happy."

"Never!" he answered. "Do I not know that my life will be your death?"

"It may not be so," she said in her beautiful renunciation of self; "and it is certain death for you to reenter those walls. Do I not know the prison fever? Philip, I bid you go; to remember poor Louise only as a dream, which, although frightful at first, you did not fear at the last."

"Neither do I fear to meet my fate. I am no coward! Come," he said, taking her hand, "let us return to our books."

Then from the depths of those lustrous eyes the soul looked out, as she answered with unfaltering devotion:

"Phillip, I cannot let you die. Go!"

The word was a command, and for the moment the deformed girl a queen. She had determined on his release; and he allowed himself to hope that he could return, and take her, with her father, to a place of safety, before Mazarin was aware of his escape, as he did not intend to present himself at court as in times past.

"I will go," he said, fondly kissing her fair brow; "but, Louise, I will not desert you, for I shall soon return, and place you with your father in a home which shall be all your own."

With those words he disappeared, and Louise Bertole kneeling, clasped her hands, and breathed a prayer for his safety.

He reached his friends; but the fever was not to be baffled; and during his ravings his friends concealed him carefully. At length, when consciousness and sufficient strength returned, he was told that Louise and her father had been placed in

close confinement, and were sentenced to death.

He remembered the favor the queen-mother had sometimes shown him, and hastened to her, to plead with her for her influence with Mazarin in behalf of his liberator and her father. She promised to intercede for them, and he hastened to the prison to carry this encouragement to Louise.

The vengeance of the cardinal had been swift, and the slight Count Philip de Villeneuve saw in the courtyard was one which saddened his future life.

Upon a rude table were stretched two forms, and sheets covered them. Near by was the scaffold.

He was never imprisoned again, as Mazarin's death occurred soon after the events related above; but the shadow of that scaffold hung over him forever, and the serious man who took the place of Count Philip de Villeneuve bore no resemblance to that gay courtier. The tragedy of his prison life had made him seem to himself a ghost among men. The remaining years of his life he devoted to the acquisition of knowledge, and he was called "Phillip the Philosopher."



## PLOT AND COUNTERPLOT.

BY GEORGE B. GRIFFITH.

WHEN first stationed at Fort C—, our ranks were filled so rapidly that the quarters then used proved inadequate, and several squads were assigned rooms that had been used for other purposes. Four young fellows, two of whom had been appointed non-commissioned officers, and the others detailed for special duty, were offered half of a large apartment on the upper floor of a building containing commissary stores—provided they would board up a room for themselves in one corner, and build a pair of stairs by way of communication with it against the outside of the building, the stairway to lead to a window answering the purpose of a door. With this proposition they cheerfully complied, inasmuch as the edifice was outside the garrison, and away from the particular espionage of their superior officers. So if they desired to have a light burning after "taps" at any time, or have a high "lark" when noise would not be a hindrance, they could indulge with no fear of being troubled by the "military guardians of the night."

One of these gay young soldier boys, shortly after they had removed into this retired abode, began to pay attentions to a lovely young lady, a resident of the town on which the fort was situated. He was scrupulously fastidious in his dress, neat in all things to a fault, and prided himself upon being the smartest-appearing soldier in our command.

One evening while he was absent, his weekly courting night, his three companions sat by the stove engaged in frolicsome conversation. Suddenly John —, a usually sober-minded fellow, proposed to play a little trick on their love-making comrade that all could enjoy. His plan was, as the night promised to be quite cloudy, to place a pail of water on the roof over the window, and attach to it a string, fastened to a sash that slid in a groove to answer the purpose of a door, the whole to be so arranged, as the eaves were quite flat, that when the sash was shoved back the contents of the pail would descend like a shower-bath over him.

The others were delighted with the idea,

and at nine o'clock, as the moon was much obscured, they fixed the bucket to it so it would work to a nicety, and blowing out their candle, awaited anxiously the grand denouement.

Two hours later their ears were tickled by the sound of their comrade's familiar footsteps, and soon he was heard tramping hastily up the stairs. Unsuspectingly grasping the window with a firm hand, he threw it back, oversetting the pail, and splash, splash down came the plenteous drops in a stream, deluging him to the skin. At the same instant a simultaneous roar of muffled laughter reached his ears, and then horrible oaths burst from his lips. All was still as death, however, when he entered the room, shaking himself like a water-dog, and swearing loud and deep. He knew it was useless endeavoring to find out who originated the plot, but determined to guess the author, and retaliate in some way upon him.

It happened a few evenings afterwards that the person, whom he strongly suspected of committing the act, visited the city of N— to attend a lecture, and he thought it would be a good occasion to hatch some punishment for his endurance. Of course the other "blades" coincided with the plan, and he immediately devised a scheme for his reception home. Across the middle of the room they stretched a stout cord to trip him up, then three or four chairs were overturned for him to stumble over ere he could recover his equilibrium; beyond them some trunks so arranged that in falling over them he would be precipitated into a great horse-trough, filled to the brim with water, which they had dragged, by assistance from others, up the stairs. Everything being in readiness, they retired, promising themselves the sight of a rich tableau, free gratis.

It chanced that the father of their absent roommate arrived in the city that evening on a visit to his son, and was met by him on the street. After attending the lecture, they started for the fort, with the understanding that the old gent should

share his son's bed. Being a little afraid that the water-trick over the window might be repeated, the young man, closely followed by his father, whom he had not informed of the possible danger, mounted the stairs, and closely inspecting the roof, for the night was dark, saw all was right, and attempted to run back the sash. The rogues had previously engaged a person to fasten them in from the outside, by slipping a nail through a crevice against the window, as they were in the habit of doing when all went out, in order to make believe they were then absent, and dismiss all fears of being "played on." Assured of their absence, and that the "coast was clear," the soldier pulled out the nail and immediately entered, his revered "parent" keeping close by his side. As the light and matches were on a little shelf at the opposite end of the room, he strode hastily in that direction, and both were sprawled headlong at the same time over the rope. Unable to save themselves, they were precipitated upon the overturned chairs, and from them were upset over the trunks headfirst into the huge horse-trough, from which they scrambled, completely soaked by the immersion, and not a little bewildered.

Believing the man who accompanied their chum was one of their own company, the rogues set up a tremendous guffaw, mingled with hoots of derision. But when a lamp was lighted, great was their chagrin on perceiving who their elder victim was; yet their humble apologies were received in good part, and the rough treatment excused.

The soldier who had so severely suffered determined to have ample vengeance for it, and set his wits to work for a movement that would punish the other three. He allowed several weeks to pass away, till the story of his mishap had become stale, and they were less shy of traps they had daily expected would be set by his hand for their disquietude. He was bound to invent a plan that should excel all others in brilliancy of execution and torture.

So one evening when they were all absent, with the assistance of the ordnance sergeant, he wrapped nearly a quarter of a pound of powder into a package composed of pasteboard and common paper, that somewhat resembled in form a gigantic cannon cracker. This he placed under an empty packing-box, that was kept at the head of their bunks for the purpose of sitting upon while they undressed. A train from his bed, which was in the lower bunk, connected with the powder, and was hid by a pair of old pants, carelessly thrown over it. He invited several of the company to participate in the fun, and they all retired about the time their victims were expected back, and hid themselves under the blankets.

Not long had they to wait. The revelers were heard approaching, and everything was put in readiness for their discomfiture. As soon as they entered they struck matches to see if any mischievous device had been arranged; but perceiving nothing unusual, they threw their matches down, as the room was sufficiently illuminated by the moon to undress by. As usual they all sat down on the old box, and commenced to remove their garments, conversing pleasantly of the adventures they had that night enjoyed. All of a sudden a report, louder than that made by a musket, rang sharply out, the box was torn asunder as if cleft by a shaft of lightning, and the thoroughly frightened occupants were unceremoniously dropped heavily to the floor, amidst a cloud of sulphurous smoke. Hearty and prolonged indulgence of mirth greeted their downfall, and it was several minutes before the stunned soldiers could realize what was the state of affairs.

Fortunately none of them were injured, but it was a severe practical joke, though perhaps a merited one. They could hardly "see the point" sufficiently to join in the hilarity that raged for some time at their expense

## THE CRANSTON MYSTERY.

BY ADA L. FLETCHER.

### CHAPTER I.

Two pictures I wish to present to my readers before my story proper begins. A valley among the mountains of Virginia just now waking into life beneath the sun's first rays. Not a village—just a little farmhouse hiding itself away in a grove of tall oaks, whose leaves, kissed by the icy lips of the frost, form a many-colored frame for my picture. At the wide rustic gate stands the group I wish you to notice. A man of perhaps thirty-five or forty years, with a face that, being once seen, can never be forgotten, so remarkable is it in feature and expression. The broad, prominent forehead, and thick shaggy brows shadowing the keen gray eyes, the firm, resolute, yet kindly mouth, now softened by a tender smile, all show the man's nature at a glance. But the most marked peculiarity of the face is a scar he has

borne for years; commencing at the roots of the hair that some other hand than that of time has rendered gray, it extends entirely over the right side of his face, just missing his eye. Not a dull faded scar, but one that glows and burns as if the fire that made it still lingered within it. The little woman who stands at his side, holding her laughing elf of a baby pressed closely to her breast, could tell you the history of that scar far better than we. Of that night so long ago, when she awoke to find herself in the midst of smoke and flames, with the wild clamor of firebells in her ears, of the gallant unknown fireman who came to her rescue, and bore her in safety away, but was struck full in the face himself by a burning beam just as they reached the ground. Of how she found him out afterward in the city hospital, and nursed him until the terrible burn

was healed; ending at last by leaving home and friends for his sake, and coming with him to make a new home in this lonely spot. Holding the bridles of two horses just outside the gate, stands a boy over whose bright head twelve happy years have passed; sad now at leaving his mother, but proud, too, of the honor of going with his father. Even as we look the farewells are spoken, the horses spring away down the leafy road, and the little woman goes slowly back to the house, whispering to the grieved astonished baby at her breast, "Cheer up, Baby Belle! It is but a little while, and papa and Harry will come back to mamma and their little darling, and then we shall be rich! Only think of it, Baby Belle! We just need this money papa goes to bring, to make the last payment on our farm, and then it is ours. Shall we not be happy, little one?" And baby, whether she understands or not, looks up into her mother's face, and is comforted.

Another picture. Still in Virginia, but in the more thickly settled portion. A hill that slopes gently down to the banks of a rapid foaming river. A wide gravelled walk, with a straight line of evergreens upon each side, leading from the base to the summit upon which stands a building, more like one of the ancient English castles than a house in modern America. It is an old, old house and has been inhabited for nearly a century by one family, the Leighs of Leigh House ranking among the first families of Virginia, and as proud and arrogant as people of such "blue blood" should be. A wild reckless set the men have always been, each generation exceeding the other in extravagance, until now only this house with the land about it is left as the inheritance of the two pretty children playing yonder upon the lawn. And this is weighed down with a mortgage, that if Colonel Leigh does not lift within a month will leave his children destitute.

No wonder the colonel's handsome face is clouded as he stands upon the veranda, and thinks of all this. Harold Leigh, colonel by courtesy, was called the "handsomest of all the Leighs" a few years ago, and though dissipation has left there its inefaceable marks, there is still a bold beauty about his face. There is nothing hidden or sinister about it, but a desperate look that mars it. And no wonder. He comes of a brave but unscrupulous race, and there

is nothing he would not do now if he could, to redeem the old place, and leave it to his son as it came to him. His wife, a still young and beautiful woman, with pride written in every feature of her face, stands at his side, one white jewelled hand resting on his shoulder, and her dark brilliant face upturned to his. "Is there nothing we can do, Harold?" she pleads. "Nothing to avert this disgrace?"

"Nothing, Adele," he answers. "I have asked my uncle for the last time to aid me, and I will starve before I will beg," and turning away, he goes rapidly down the walk, toward the town that lies in the distance. Adele Leigh, with just such a look at all this beauty about her, as Eve must have given the garden when she knew she must leave it forever, covers her eyes with her hands, and hurries into the house.

## CHAPTER II.

It had been raining all day, at Cranston. Not a dashing noisy rain, such as one delights to witness—from the windows—nor a fitful April rain, with flashes of sunlight between the clouds, but all day long it had been gently, steadily raining. A fine misty rain, that did not seem at first to dampen even one's outer garments, but for all that crept steadily through them, until they were saturated. There had been very little business done at Cranston that day, and its people stayed closely beneath their own roofs, if happily they did not leak. But now as night came down, the men began to find their way to their usual places of resort, and the village dry-goods store was soon filled with loungers. A motley company of varied degrees and castes, from the doctor and lawyer, who invariably chose this for their arena of debate, because here they were always sure of an audience, down to the poor half-idiot, who crept behind the stove, because he had no place else to go.

"Good-evening, doctor," said Lawyer Sprague, as he made room for the gentleman beside him.

"Don't know what you'd call a *bad* evening," growled the doctor, as he loosened his woollen comforter from about his throat. "If you call *this* good! I haven't seen a worse night in twenty years."

"I'd hate mighty bad to be out traveling such a night as this," said the one clerk of the establishment, drumming his

heels contentedly against the counter.

"Has the colonel been in to-day, Henley?" inquired Doctor Arnold.

"No, but I'm looking for him every minute. He can't stay away very long from the house next door," said the clerk with a wink, referring to Cranston's one liquor saloon. "And he always comes in here before he goes home."

"He's been looking awful down in the mouth, for him, lately," said the doctor. "His affairs must be in a pretty bad fix, ain't they, Sprague?"

"I tell no tales out of school," said the lawyer, with dignity.

Just then the door opened, and Harold Leigh came in, and the rising of the crowd of loungers to make room for him, the way the clerk descended from his perch on the counter to greet him, and the proprietor of the store came forward from the desk with a polite "Anything I can do for you, colonel?" all showed that in spite of his misfortunes, he was still the man of Cranston. There was no downcast look about him now. He had been drinking deeply, and the baleful glow of brandy was in his eye and on his cheek. He came forward with the easy grace of movement that characterized him and took the seat that was offered him.

"I shall want a package of candles for the little ones when I start home, Andrews," he said. "But I shall not go just yet—How are you and the doctor making it, Sprague, on the last subject of discussion?"

Before the lawyer could answer, there came to their ears the sound of a faint hallo at the door, almost drowned by the rushing noise of the wind and rain. All crowded about the door as Henley threw it open, curious to see what manner of man it could be abroad on such a night as this. The light of the lantern the clerk held flashed through the rain and darkness, and fell upon two figures on horseback.

"I want shelter, friend, for man and beast," said a clear manly voice, in answer to the clerk's inquiry—"Can you give it to us?"

"Don't stand to ask," called Henley; "but come in out of the storm a while anyway," and in a few minutes the two, the stalwart robust man, and the slender blue-eyed boy, with raindrops glistening on his long lashes, stood in their midst. All

made room for them about the stove, and a respectful silence was observed, until Henley, whom his employer said, "nothing between heaven and earth could keep still," broke in with, "It's an awful bad night for such a little chap as that to be out, mister. How did it happen?"

"We have been a month away from home, and Harry was as anxious as I to get as near it as possible," said the elder traveller. "But we can't leave our horses out there. Is there no place where we can stable them for to-night?"

"I don't know I'm sure," began the merchant; but before he could go on, Colonel Leigh, who, whatever his faults might be, was the very soul of hospitality, spoke quickly:

"If you are not too tired, sir, to ride another mile in this storm, my stables are at your service."

"I shall go, sir, with pleasure," said the man, rising. "I am only too glad to get a mile further on my road."

"Put up those candles then, Henley," said the colonel, "while I get my buggy." And in a little while more the three were riding away in the storm and darkness together, the colonel, with his head on his breast musing morosely—thoughts called up by the remembrance of the empty stables to which he was going; stables once filled by the finest of blooded stock—thinking he would almost give his life for the paltry sum of three thousand dollars to-night, the amount of the mortgage, when ten years ago he had given that much for a span of carriage horses, with as little thought as he had to-night given a dollar for the candles he held in his hand. The stranger with his hand upon his belt, thought of three thousand dollars hidden there—the price of the wild western land he had once deemed valueless, and thought how the brown eyes of a little woman at home would sparkle with joy, when he counted it into her lap, and she knew their home was safe to them at last!

### CHAPTER III.

VERY few who lived in Cranston, at the time our story begins, are alive to-day, but they have never forgotten the week of storm that followed that rainy day. Not for an hour did the wind and rain abate, for seven long dreary days and nights, and

people began to look anxiously to the foundation of their houses, almost believing that a second flood was upon them. But at last the rain ceased, and the sun shone forth, brighter, it seemed to eyes so weary of clouds, than it had ever shone before. Early in the morning of this first bright day Colonel Leigh drove into town, and to his lawyer's office, where he was closeted for an hour, then drove out again, but in a different direction, as rapidly as he came. When Sprague entered the store after his client was gone, he was greeted with a clamor of questions. "Where had the colonel gone? What was the matter with him? He looked like a ghost, didn't he?" To which the lawyer answered, that "Colonel Leigh had gone to Richmond, where he had a chance to get the money to lift the mortgage which they all knew burdened his estate; that he was not very well, and perhaps did look pale."

Then Henley, who never forgot anything that everybody else did forget, wanted to know what had become of the guests the colonel took home with him that night. Sprague said he had asked the colonel about them, because he was interested in the man whose face he could not forget. They had gone on, Colonel Leigh said, at daylight next morning, in spite of the weather saying that they must get home. Then the conversation turned upon some other subject, and the travellers were forgotten until a week later. Then a company of men, who were engaged in taking a raft across the river which was now at what was called a "boating tide," were shocked at discovering the dead body of a man lodged in the branches of a tree that had been uprooted by the tide. Swollen and disfigured though it was, Henley who had joined the crowd that day on leave of absence from the store, recognized it in an instant as the body of the elder traveller, who had entered his employer's store that stormy night. And when all those who were present then were called before the coroner's jury, to testify, this was established beyond a doubt. There were no marks of violence on the body, and his pocket-book containing fifty dollars in bank notes, together with a handsome gold watch, were still in their places. These facts led the jury to pronounce it a case of accidental drowning. For many days the river was searched for the body of the boy, but it was not found, and it was

supposed that the two, in attempting to ford the river, had been swept from their horses, and the lighter body of the boy borne on, and on, none could tell whither. The horses had either perished, also, in the swift rush of the water, or had found their way home. Mr. Sprague wrote a full account of the affair to the leading Richmond papers, describing accurately the appearance of the unfortunate traveller, but no inquiries were ever made, and the watch and money remained unclaimed.

And in that little valley in the mountains a patient brown-eyed woman watched through the long long days for her dear ones, or listened for the tidings of their welfare, until in the silence of one anxious sleepless night she heard the trample of horses' feet at the gate, and, springing up her heart beating wildly with hope, rushed out to the gate to find the horses riderless. From that awful hour she knew nothing more for weeks, and so if the papers containing the account of the drowning of her husband and son had reached that isolated settlement, Laura Ainslie would have been none the wiser. The neighbors kindly took care of her and her baby, until she was able to travel, when feeble and utterly broken-hearted, she went back to her old home in New Orleans, and her friends who had known nothing of her for years gladly took the sorrowing woman in. But they were not rich, and after a while recovering health and strength, she made for herself a humble home in a little town not very far from the great city, and there with her needle she supported herself and reared "Baby Belle" to womanhood.

#### CHAPTER IV.

COLONEL LEIGH was immediately made acquainted with the facts narrated above, as he was in Richmond at the time, and no one could have been more startled and shocked than he. He hastened his return, sending orders before him though, that the body of the stranger should be interred at his expense in the private burying-ground of the Leighs. It was noticed by all that a great change had taken place in the colonel's appearance and habits since he left Cranston. From the merry genial "boon companion," lingering long over wine and cards, with a smile and jest for every one, he had become a silent, reserved, taciturn

man. Wine never again passed his lips, and cards were never seen again in his hands. At home the change was even more marked. He had been very demonstrative in his love for his wife and children, but now he scarcely spoke to them from the time he entered the house until he left it again, and seemed to shrink from their caresses. Adele, seeing this, grew more and more proud and reserved, and the two drifted further and further apart, until there was not even the semblance of love between them. And the little Stuart and Lillian grew up in this strange atmosphere as plants grow without sunshine.

Not long after this Colonel Leigh was called to the deathbed of his uncle, whose sole heir he became to a fortune even larger than that which he had squandered; but instead of returning with the cheerful face such a change of circumstances warranted, he was even "more like a walking corpse than ever," said the town gossips. But a band of workmen followed him from the city, and in a short time wonderful were the improvements made in the old "Castle." The old house was so thoroughly modernized and changed that the ghosts of some of the ancient Leighs, who were still said to "walk" through its long halls and corridors, must have been puzzled where to turn their steps; and an entirely new wing was built and fitted up for the occupancy of the family. There had been no company at Leigh House for many years, but now it was announced as the colonel's intention to throw open its doors for the reception of visitors upon a certain night in November, as a kind of "house-warming"—almost a year since the night our story began. Indeed, some of the gossips remembered that it was just a year that night since the week of storm began. Just such another night it was, too, but very few of those who were invited allowed the weather to cheat them out of a glimpse of the grandeur of which they had as yet only heard. And they were almost repaid for their walk or drive through the storm by even a view of its external appearance, so brilliantly was it illuminated. Colonel Leigh received them, more like *himself* than they had seen him for months; and went with them through the beautiful rooms and halls, until all had been seen and admired. Then they were taken to

the drawing-room, where a band of musicians awaited them. They did not see their hostess for a while, and when she did appear, leaning upon her husband's arm, every heart in the assembly felt an awful hush fall upon it, as if, indeed, a ghost had appeared among them. She was dressed magnificently in a rich black velvet robe, with diamonds sparkling in her hair and about her throat. But O, the dreadful pallor of her face! like the pallor of one long dead; and those wild, staring, pleading eyes! She made the rounds of the room, but spoke to no one, and seemed ever striving to break away from her husband, whose grasp, though seemingly gentle, left dull red marks upon the rounded arm. Her presence was a restraint upon all; and when her husband was compelled to leave her alone for a few minutes, and she darted swiftly from the room, every heart drew a sigh of relief.

But ere they had time to wonder among themselves at her strange conduct, they were startled by a piercing shriek that rent the air, followed by another and another, each louder than the first. The timid ones shrank back in fear, but some, emboldened by necessity, sprang up the stairs in the direction of the noise. It was in one of the elegant little bedrooms of the new wing they found her, standing in the centre of the room, still screaming as if every shriek would rend the delicate throat asunder, and pointing with one slender white hand to one of its western windows.

Her husband, who was the first to reach the room, seized her almost roughly in his arms, and bore her away; but not until keen eyes had taken cognizance of the phenomenon to which that trembling hand had pointed. The window was a large one, composed of but four panes of remarkably clear transparent glass. Upon one of these there was distinctly portrayed a human face—a face that no one who had ever seen the face of the stranger whose body was mouldering to dust in the family burying-ground, could fail to recognize.

There had been colored lights suspended in the balconies, and one of these, a dull crimson, shining directly upon this pane of glass, brought out the well-remembered scar in terrible relief, thus rendering the likeness unmistakable.

While they were still standing there, gazing, trembling in superstitious fear,

Harold Leigh came back among them, his cold haughty self again. His words of explanation were few. Dr. Arnold, who was present, would testify, he said, that Mrs. Leigh had always been predisposed to insanity—that it was hereditary in her family. He had found her that evening just at sunset in that room, which had been set apart for her own exclusive use, in the same state in which they had seen her that night, brought on, she declared, by a picture upon the window, which was of course but an insane idea. He had compelled her to appear among her guests, thinking to divert her mind, but the result they had seen. He would be obliged to dismiss them for to-night, thanking them for their kindness, etc.

And they went away, in such a state of mind as can well be imagined but not described. Adele Leigh never recovered her reason, but, after lingering a while, died, raving of that face upon the window, that followed her, she said, with its haunting accusing eyes even to the grave. Her husband allowed no one but the physician to see her while she lived; and after her death, and the gentle Lillian had like a shadow followed her, he shut himself up in the great gloomy house with his little son, neither asking nor receiving sympathy. Many were the dark whispers and surmises as to the cause of the appearance of that face upon the glass, but there was no other proof of their suspicions; and this they knew would not be received as evidence before a jury.

Again and again was the glass taken out and replaced by others, and again and again did the face reappear, until at last, in desperation, the room was closed, and the window boarded up; but not until the phenomenon had been witnessed by hundreds who thronged hither. For though they were refused admittance to the house, the face was plainly visible from the lawn, especially at the hour of sunset, when the scar glowed angrily as in life.

## CHAPTER V.

**TWENTY** years from the time our story began we take up the thread again. It is in a crowded railway car we find ourselves this time, whirling dizzily along, for the engineer is behind time, and there is danger ahead. The passengers have been

very sleepy until apprised of this fact, but now they are painfully awake. The least concerned of all appears to be a young man who is trying to write in his notebook as the train flies on. "And why should I be concerned?" he writes. "I am not aware of a single heart that would mourn my loss, and don't know of any reason why I should wish to live longer. I am only twenty-four years old, and have not had many personal trials and tribulations; but—" Here pencil and book flew from his fingers in a sudden jar of the train, and he remembered nothing more until he opened his eyes, two hours later, in the little wayside cottage, whither he had been borne, out of the few surviving passengers from the wreck of that flying train. A pale motherly face bent above him, and a gentle hand was pressed upon his eyes.

"Don't even try to think just yet," she said, kindly; and he went to sleep. And when he awoke refreshed he found his right arm splintered and bandaged, lying by his side, and the bruised swollen hand being very tenderly bathed by a girl whose face was very much like the one he had first seen, only very much younger and fairer. Very familiar did both those faces become to Stuart Leigh during his long tedious convalescence, and so very dear, one of them, that he thanked the kind Providence that brought him on this tour and threw him at the little widow's door; for he had something to live for now. The sweet girl he loves so dearly has promised to go back with him to his stately Virginian home as his wife. And, of course, the little widow will go, too, for he cannot separate the two who have been all in all to each other for so long. So he wrote to his father, his only living relative, and this was the answer he received:

"I am glad, my son, that you have found 'something to live for,' and I sincerely hope you will be happy. But it will be necessary for you to come home before you bring your bride, for, as you know, the house is greatly in need of repair, and I have not the life in me to superintend the work."

So Stuart went home to make the "old cage ready for his bird," he said. His father, a prematurely aged, bent old man, with hair unnaturally white, kept himself closely to the room that had been almost his cell for the last twenty years, but gave



his son permission to do as he pleased with the remainder of the house. So, as nothing was too good for "bonnie Belle," the long unused rooms were thrown open and fitted up in a style surpassing even their former elegance. It was a cold dark night in November when Stuart Leigh brought home his bride. By his father's wish there was no one there to receive him but himself and the long line of family servants who filled the hall, but the house was brilliantly illuminated. Colored lights swung from the trees on the lawn and danced from the balconies. The old colonel was very kind to his shrinking little daughter-in-law, and very gracious to her mother, who seemed strangely oppressed by all the grandeur about her, and very glad when the servant took her to her own room. But scarcely had the door closed upon her when the servant was recalled by a piercing scream from within; and when Stuart, who was passing, came into the room, he found the widow standing as his mother had stood twenty years before, with one trembling hand pointing to the window upon which the swinging red light outside had brought out the ghastly face again in horrible relief. The brown eyes of the woman were widely dilated, and her lips blanched and quivering, but her words fell distinctly on the silence of the room. "My husband! It is my husband's face!" And then she sank insensible to the floor.

Horror-stricken, he knew not why, Stuart stooped to raise her, when he heard another heavy fall beside him, and found his father prostrate but not unconscious; better far for him if it had been so; but with eyes wide open he was gazing steadily at the face upon the window.

Laura Ainslie was a woman of strong nerves, and recovering herself very soon, saw the instant necessity of keeping the terrible truth at which she had but guessed herself from her child, whose lease of life was but short at best, and who now stood trembling and pallid by her side. So she took her gently from the room, explaining as best she could the scene that had just taken place, leaving Stuart and the servants to care for the death-stricken man. After she had quieted Belle, and saw that she was sleeping, she found her way to his room; and as they watched beside him she told Stuart the story of her husband's mysterious disappearance, and her own con-

jectures concerning it to-night. And Stuart, remembering the story he had heard when a child of the supposed drowning of the unknown travellers, and connecting it with what he knew of his father's life since that time, and what he had been told of his mother's death, and seeing through all the avenging face upon the window, *knew* that she was right. And what must have been the emotions that surged through that young man's heart as he felt that the man lying there—his father—one of the hitherto proud and unsullied name of Leigh, was a robber and an assassin! No wonder when the gray light of the morning stole in upon the silent watchers, that Stuart's form was bent as with age, and the brown hair, that had lain upon a care-free brow the night before, was heavily streaked with gray.

Harold Leigh never spoke again, but toward the close of the following day he recovered enough to show his son where his written confession might be found; and then, still with that look of unutterable horror and despair in his eyes, he died.

Then the two—the wife of the murdered man, and the son of the murderer—read the confession together. It was minute—giving full particulars. How Satan had entered his heart when Ainslie confided to him his secret, and showed him the fatal three thousand dollars; the very sum he needed to save him from ruin; how he had stolen to his guests' room at midnight, and stifling him with chloroform, had robbed him of life and money at once. He had not meant to take the boy's life, he said, until he had wakened and stared at him in the very act of murdering his father; then the chloroform was used, and with that one look from the blue eyes, the boy's innocent soul went up to God. With almost superhuman strength he had carried the bodies to the river and committed them to the waves, turning their horses loose afterward saddled and bridled. Then he had given out to his household, as has already been told, that his guests had left before daylight.

The confession implicated no one else; and whether Adele Leigh was cognizant of, or accessory to, her husband's crime, her son never knew. Mrs. Ainslee knew that her daughter's life was bound up in Stuart's, and so, for the sake of the living, she spared the memory of the dead; and it

was tacitly agreed between the two that they should keep their awful secret even from Belle. But they could not live there; so the old place passed into the hands of strangers, and the three went back to their Southern home. The curse, though, has been pronounced even unto the third and fourth generation—"Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord." Oppressed by the weight of the secret of her husband's death, it was not long until Mrs. Ainslee left the world; and Belle, gentle angel Belle, could not live without her; and in spite of her husband's watchful care and love, she left him for her mother's arms in heaven. And

to-day Stuart Leigh, though innocent in the eyes of God and man, wanders Cain-like over the face of the earth, seeking peace and finding none.

The secret was not as well kept as they had imagined. The servants, knowing a little and guessing at a great deal more, soon spread the story abroad; and the old house has never been inhabited long at a time since, and is still pointed out as the haunted house, though the first tenants had the glass removed, and the phantom face, having performed its mission of vengeance, disappeared forever.

## THE CROSS OF THE LEGION.

BY JAMES D. MC'CABE, JR.

It was a holiday in one of the loveliest towns in all the south of France, and the townspeople were busy with their merry-making. A group of them had, however, drawn off from the crowd in the marketplace, and were listening to an old sergeant who was relating the story of one of the battles through which he had passed. It was a time when brave deeds met with a ready admiration, and a high reward, and when no one was so greatly honored as a soldier.

"And so you were with the First Consul at Lodi, sergeant?" said one of the group, a plain honest old farmer.

"Ah, *mon ami*," replied the soldier, "that I was. I was just behind him as he went over the bridge. That was a sight worth seeing. Twice we had failed to carry the bridge, for the Austrian batteries swept it with an infernal hail. A third time we advanced. Bonaparte's eye was on us, and we had promised him to succeed. We advanced steadily until we reached the *tête du pont*. Then, zounds, how the grape whistled among us. Down went many a brave fellow. We wavered, we were falling back, when we saw two men pushing forward on the bridge right into the enemy. They were the general in command, and Bonaparte himself. "Forward," I shouted, "Bonaparte is in danger." We sprang forward again, and the battery was ours. It

was a brave deed, and we made our little hero a corporal for it."

"I would have liked to have been there," said a young man who had listened quietly.

"You, Ange?" said the farmer, laughing; "what would you have done?"

"I would have done my duty," said the young man, calmly.

"Bah! you'd have been frightened out of your wits."

"We are keeping the sergeant from relating the adventure," said one of the group. "Go on, sergeant."

"That's all of that adventure," said the sergeant, who had been looking fixedly at the young man whom the farmer had called Ange. "I'll tell you of an adventure I had with the Little Corporal near about the same time. I was then a private, and was posted one night near an old tower, with orders to let no one pass with or without the countersign. About midnight some one came opposite my post. I halted him. He told me he had the countersign. "Retire, comrade," I said, "My orders are not to receive any countersign." "But I am an officer," exclaimed the stranger, sternly, "a general officer, and I must pass." "If you were the Little Corporal himself, you should not pass," I replied, "so retire, friend, or I fire." With that I levelled my piece, and the stranger retired. The next morning the Little Corporal sent for me.

"So you threatened to fire on me last night," he said, sternly. "Yes, general," I replied. "Did you know who it was?" "I did, general." "If I had advanced, would you have fired?" "No, general, I should have disabled you with my bayonet, and have called the guard."

"Were you not afraid to talk so to him?" asked the farmer.

"I knew I had done nought but my duty," said the sergeant. "But tell me, young man," he added, turning to Ange, "what do you think he said?"

"He praised you, and said you had done your duty," replied Ange, with heightened color.

"Right," exclaimed the sergeant, approvingly. "He laid his hand on my shoulder, and said, looking me in the face, 'Pierre Dubois, you have proved yourself worthy of being something better than a private. I make you a sergeant for threatening to shoot me last night.' With that he sent me back to my company."

As the sergeant finished speaking, the young man called Ange left the group in compliance with a summons from a young girl across the street.

"Who is that young man?" asked the old soldier.

"He is Ange Pitols," replied the farmer. "We call him 'Ange the dreamer.' He is an artist, but does nothing but paint the picture of that young girl with whom you see him now. He seems incapable of doing anything but thinking of her. He was always a quiet sleepy sort of a fellow, and but for the handsome property left him by his father, I suppose he would starve. Madeleine Tremouille, however, does not seem to care much for him. She leads him 'a dance,' and rarely misses an opportunity to ridicule him."

"Where does he live?" asked the sergeant.

"In yonder house. Maybe he'll paint your portrait if you'll ask him, sergeant; but don't be surprised if he paints your form and regimentals, and then puts in Madeleine's face."

A laugh greeted this sally. The soldier joined in it, but soon left the crowd.

Late in the afternoon, Ange Pitols was sitting in his doorway smoking. The young man was just twenty-two. His parents, who had been wealthy, were both dead, and had left him a handsome fortune. He was

a natural artist, and as the farmer had said, a dreamer, but was not deserving of the ridicule that was cast upon him. The townspeople were incapable of appreciating his genius, and his odd ways were deemed worthy of nothing but ridicule. Ange's naturally good temper enabled him to bear all of this good-humoredly, but sometimes he felt greatly tempted to resent it. On the evening in question, he was sitting in his doorway, smoking, and thinking of the farmer's words to him, that he would have been frightened had he been at Lodi, when, chancing to raise his eyes, he saw the sergeant coming up the street towards him. The old man stopped in front of the door, and giving the military salute, said, as Ange rose to receive him:

"Your pardon for this intrusion, Citizen Pitols, but your words interested me greatly to-day, and I thought I would pay you a visit this afternoon."

"You are right welcome, sergeant," said the young man. "I was just thinking about you."

The sergeant seated himself in the chair which the young man offered him, and then resting his cap on his knee, said, bluntly:

"Do you know, Citizen Pitols, that I think you have chosen the wrong profession in life?"

"Ah?" asked Ange, with a smile, "what should I be, sergeant?"

"A soldier," replied his visitor. "You may be a good painter, for all I know, *mon ami*, but you ought to be a soldier. I could see, to-day while I was telling of our battles, that your heart was where my thoughts were. You would make a good soldier, Citizen Pitols. You would enter the ranks with a determination to rise, and you would do so. You might in time be a colonel, a general. The Little Corporal himself came almost from the ranks, and many of our bravest and best generals are of the same origin."

"But it takes a brave man to be a successful soldier, doesn't it, sergeant?"

"To be sure. Can a dove fly without wings?"

"You heard Farmer Beaupre say I would have been frightened out of my wits at Lodi?"

"Well?"

"These people think me an innocent harmless dreamer, without ambition, and without courage. Now tell me, sergeant,

do you think I could rise in the army?"

"You may be a dreamer," said the old soldier, emphatically, "but you have both ambition and courage. You only want something to draw them out of you. No one but an ambitious man could have your face, and no coward could have the clear unfaltering eye that you have. The army will put an end to your dreaming, and develop your better qualities. What say you, will you go with me? I go to my company in ten days. Will you go with me?"

"I have been thinking of this ever since you have been here, but have not made up my mind," answered Ange.

"Then make it up now, Citizen Pitois," said the old man; "believe me, I wish you well. I am old enough to be your father, and I hope you will not resent my frankness as impertinence."

"Say what you will, *mon ami*," said Ange, "I will take it kindly."

"You love a girl who thinks you a dreamer—she ridicules you. If you remain here this will continue, and she will end by rejecting you, for a woman will not marry a man whom she ridicules. Go with me, and command her admiration. Let her hear of you by your brave deeds. In three years you will be permitted to come home. Think how she would glory in you to see you come back with an epaulet, and the Cross of the Legion. Will you go with me now?"

Both had risen to their feet, and now the young man grasped the sergeant's hand heartily.

"There's my hand upon it, sergeant, I'll go with you. You are right, altogether. Madeleine shall yet be proud of me, and I will bring back to her both the epaulet and the Cross."

"*Vive la France!*" cried the old soldier, enthusiastically. "You'll be a general yet, *mon ami*. Never fear for the result. I'll answer for it with my life."

Ange now produced wine, and they sat for sometime over their glasses, talking of a soldier's life. The sergeant did not disguise its hardships and dangers (he was too true a soldier for that), but he painted its glories and pleasures in bright colors. It was the early part of the year 1804, only a few weeks previous to the establishment of the empire by Napoleon, and at a time when France was at peace with her neighbors. The sergeant, however, like the majority of the soldiers, regarded the peace as

only a brief truce, which was soon to be broken, and looked forward to the future as full of glory and fighting. He did not know the condition of affairs in Paris, and was ignorant that his great commander was preparing to place upon his brows the imperial diadem. Neither did he dream of the opposition of the powers of Europe, who both feared his Little Corporal for his power, and hated him for his greatness, but he looked forward to the future as a period of war, and felt sure that his expectations would be realized. This much he said to Ange Pitois, and told the young man that it would do no harm to enlist in a season of peace.

"You'll be rid of your greenness before you go into the field," he said, "and that will be an advantage to you, to face the bullets with your wits about you."

When the sergeant went away about twilight, he carried with him Ange's solemn promise to go with him when he returned to the army. He had taken a great fancy to the young man, and was determined to make a soldier of him.

After the sergeant had left him, Ange sat for a long time in the doorway, thinking of many things. Madeleine now looked on him with ridicule; she thought of him as all the rest did. The sergeant was right, she would never marry him as long as she looked upon him in such a light. He must first win her respect and admiration, and that he could not do by remaining in the town. The sergeant was clearly right. The army was the place for him. The moon had risen, when he roused himself from his thoughts, and took the road that led towards Madeleine's home.

Madeleine Tremonille came of a good family, a circumstance which was of importance even in republican France, at that time. She was only twenty-one, and one of the most beautiful women in all France, and would not have shamed even the consular halls by her presence or bearing. She was, like Ange Pitois, an orphan, and was well off in worldly goods. She was greatly admired by the young men of the town and the surrounding country, but none could boast of being a favored lover. She was not disposed to enter the matrimonial noose yet, and consequently kept all off at a distance. She was fully aware of the state of Ange's feelings for her, and in her heart was not displeased by this knowledge. Indeed, she

liked Ange better than any of his rivals, and though she ridiculed and teased him about his queer ways, she could not deny that she had a warm place for him in her heart. She did not know exactly whether she loved him or not, but she was sure that she liked him better than any one else. She was standing in the porch when Ange reached her home, and was gazing so intently at the moon, that she did not notice him as he came up. As they had been friends ever since their childhood, the formalities of society were rarely used between them when by themselves.

"Are you dreaming, Madeleine?" he asked, as he came up.

She started, but answered with a laugh:

"No, Ange, I leave that to you."

"But I have done dreaming, Madeleine."

"Then the sun will stop shining. You can't help dreaming, Ange. It's as natural to you as flirting is to me."

"I have done dreaming all but one dream, Madeleine. That one I hope I shall never give up until it becomes a reality."

"Tell it to me, Ange, and maybe I can judge of the probability of its being realized."

"If you will walk with me, I will tell it to you," said Ange.

Madeleine consented, and the two turned into the grounds, and the young woman taking his arm, prepared to listen to his recital.

"Now, Ange, let me hear your dream," said Madeleine, who had no idea of what he was about to say, for she was not expecting him to avow his love for her then.

"It is a dream that I have clung to ever since my boyhood, Madeleine," began the young man; "a dream that has seemed so bright and beautiful to me that I have sometimes thought it would never be realized. I have loved you, Madeleine, better than all else in the world, and love you now better than ever. With this love has come a dream that you will love me, and when I ask you, you will be my wife. Shall the dream be realized, Madeleine?"

It was a sudden avowal, and took the young woman by surprise. She hesitated, and then said, half reluctantly:

"This is something I did not expect when we began our walk, Ange. It is very sudden, and I—"

"You hesitate, Madeleine," he said, calmly, "and I am not surprised. Listen to me.

For years you, in common with others, have known me as a dreamer, and a something below what a man should be. You cannot love one upon whom others—nay, upon whom yourself look down. Is it not so?"

"I think you are better and nobler than most persons believe you," answered Madeleine; "but you do not, if you wish me to be frank, come up to my idea of what my husband should be."

"I thought so," said the young man; "but it will be so no longer. I have not done my duty, Madeleine. I shall do better in the future. I am going away very shortly."

"Going away, Ange? Where?"

"I shall leave here in ten days for Boulougne, where I shall enlist in the army."

"But there is no war now."

"No, but I feel sure this shallow peace cannot last. There will be fighting soon, and I shall have an opportunity of making myself a name of which you will be proud."

"And are you so anxious to go away from me, Ange?" asked the young woman, in a tone of reproach.

"You have told me, Madeleine," said Ange, with great earnestness, "that I am not what you would wish for a husband, and I feel sure that you are right. I wish to make myself worthy, not only of your love, but of your respect and admiration. If I remain here, there is no prospect of my escaping from my old life. I must go where some great power can turn me into the paths that lead to higher ends than those in which I now walk. I have come to you to-night to tell you this, and ask you if you will try me. In three years I will return, and will bring with me an epaulet and a cross. You will be proud of me then, and I shall have the greatest reward I could hope for. Will you consent to this?"

"I think you are right, Ange," said Madeleine. "Had you been a different man, I would have loved you from the first; and as it is, I like you better than any one I know. Go, and for your own sake as well as mine, try to make a name among the brave men with whom you will be thrown, so that France as well as I may be proud of you. The First Consul is the soldier's friend, and if you do your duty bravely, he will reward you."

"And if at the end of three years I bring you the epaulet and the cross, will you be my wife, Madeleine?"

"Your true and loving wife, if you will take me when you have grown so great," was her reply.

"Take you, Madeleine?" said Ange, smiling. "Were I the First Consul himself, I would deem myself honored by your love."

And so the matter was settled, and in ten days Ange Pitois accompanied Sergeant Dubois to Boulogne. Madeleine found that she had loved the young man better than she had thought, and as the last few days of his stay in town had shown her Ange's character in a new light, she felt confident that he would be successful.

In due time Ange and the sergeant reached Boulogne, where the old man's regiment was stationed. Scarcely had the young recruit become well grounded in his training, when the consular chair was replaced by the imperial throne, and France commenced that career of glory which ended so unhappily for her. Ange was well pleased with this change, for now that Napoleon held the supreme power of the state, he felt sure that there would be a better chance for promotion in the army. He was a soldier by nature, and his close attention to his duties impressed his officers so favorably with him, that when the campaign of 1805, which followed the infamous coalition of Austria and Russia opened, and his regiment set out for Germany to join the emperor, who had abandoned his designs upon England, to crush enemies still more dangerous, Ange went as Sergeant Pitois. His regiment was the Forty-Seventh of the Line, and was in advance, and was frequently engaged in unimportant but severe encounters. In all these Ange bore himself bravely, and exhibited so many high soldierly qualities, that when he stood in the gloom of the dreary morning, watching for the sun that was to light the field of Austerlitz, he was Captain Ange Pitois. He had the epaulet, but the cross was yet to come.

The Forty-Seventh was right in front that day, and suffered horribly. The Russians opposite whom it was posted held their ground manfully, and a well-served battery tore huge gaps in the French ranks. Man after man went down. Three charges of the French were repulsed, and when the fourth was sounded Ange found himself the only commissioned officer left unharmed. And all the rest, from the colonel down, had been killed or wounded, and half of the regiment were *hors du combat*. He saw at a

glance the necessity of carrying the battery, for unless it was captured the key to the Russian position would remain in the hands of the foe.

In a moment he was at the head of the remnant of the regiment. Seizing the standard, he tore the tri-color from the staff, and wrapping it around him, shouted:

"Forward. Follow the colors."

With a thrilling cheer, the men pushed on after him, right on to the guns. How the grape and cannister tore through their ranks! How the bright French blood streamed out in the path of the Forty-Seventh! No one thought of danger. Every eye was fixed on the form wrapped in the flag, as it dashed right in among the guns. The battery was reached; a brief sickening struggle followed, and then the grape and cannister swept like a whirlwind through the ranks of the retreating Russians. The battery had been won by a handful of men, and in an instant a fresh brigade arrived to support the little band.

At the same moment an officer, who had witnessed the whole charge from the moment Ange had torn the flag from the staff, rode up, accompanied by two or three aids.

"Who commands this regiment?" he asked, abruptly.

"I do," said Ange, as he came forward, with his handkerchief pressed to a deep sword cut in the forehead.

"Your name and rank?" asked the officer.

"Ange Pitois, captain of the Forty-Seventh Regiment of the Line."

"Let it be mentioned in the report of the battle," said the officer, turning to one of his aids, "that this battery was captured by the heroic Forty-Seventh, led by its brave commander, Colonel Ange Pitois."

Ange now glanced up, and for the first time saw the officer's face. In an instant his head was uncovered, and bowed profoundly.

"Colonel," said the officer, smiling, "to make your reward complete, take this." And, moving his horse closer to the young man, the officer took from the breast of his gray surtout a small cross, and buttoned it on the coat of the young colonel. "The regiment shall be rewarded when the battle is ended," he said.

There was a shout from the group, and the cry of "*Vive l'Empereur*" rolled down the lines as Napoleon turned and rode away.

Ange's rise was the most rapid in the army. He was exceedingly popular, and his quick promotion was regarded by all as only what he deserved. Old soldiers predicted that he would be a marshal of the empire if he lived a few years longer, and the emperor himself watched his course with a favorable eye. Jena was his greatest battle, however, before he set out for home, and when the official bulletin was published in the *Moniteur*, the name of Colonel Pitois, commanding brigade, was published among the list of the disabled.

A few months later Madeleine Tremonille, who had heard regularly from Ange Pitois, and who was wondering that she had not received any letter from him for several months, was told that an officer of the army was below who wished to see her, as he had a message for her from a friend. She descended to the drawing-room, and there found an officer, who sat in a dark corner of the room. As he rose to receive her she noticed that he had but one arm, but it was too dark for her to distinguish his features.

"You have a message for me from Colonel Pitois, I believe," she said.

"From General Pitois, mademoiselle," said the officer. "He was fortunate enough to render such great services at Jena that the emperor thought it worth his while to make him a general. I am sorry to say, however," he continued, "that the general

was terribly wounded in the battle, and is now so much disfigured that you would scarcely know him. He has commissioned me to say to you that he has become so badly maimed that he cannot expect to hold you to your promise to him. He authorizes me to say to you that you are free from all ties that have bound you to him."

"Does General Pitois wish to be free from them himself?" asked Madeleine, slowly.

"On the contrary," replied the officer, "he is overwhelmed with grief at the idea of losing you."

"Then say to him," said Madeleine, proudly, "that I never loved him so well as I do now, and that I will not accept his generous offer."

In an instant she was clasped to the officer's breast with his remaining arm, and his kisses fell upon her lips, and Madeleine knew that the stranger was no other than Ange Pitois.

There was a merry wedding a week later, when the gallant General Pitois led to the altar the fairest woman in the south of France. It was noticed by those present at the ceremony that the bride wore a soldier's ornament. It was the cross for which she had given her heart. Her husband did not miss it, for on his breast glittered the grand Cross of the Legion of Honor, which the emperor had sent him as a wedding gift.



## THE CRUISE OF THE ARIADNE.

BY RICHARD FAULKNER.

A LONG low line of ragged coast lay half enveloped in fog, one May morning, years ago. The mists were rolling off the green hills above the sea, and the air was full of the rich scent of apple blossoms, from the orchards beyond. A light breeze stole up softly from the west—too softly, as yet, to fill the sails of the trim little brig that stood outward bound. At intervals, the fog was pierced, for a moment, with a bright ray from the sun; but its filmy curtains closed again, as if to warn the commander not to trust the deceitful ray. The sails loosely flapping, seemed to answer the appeal, and to declare that some time must yet elapse before the brig would "walk the waters."

On the deck of the brig a young man was standing, in the half careless, half commanding position that denoted his authority. This was Captain St. Maur, the commander of the little brig, and half owner of the same.

Low in stature and somewhat broad-shouldered, the figure of Captain St. Maur was not one that generally pleases a lady's eye; yet few could look twice upon the thoughtful and intelligent face, with its calm smile, the firm red lips enclosing teeth white as ivory, the wide brow, with its wealth of glossy brown hair, and the pleasant blue eyes, that lighted up the whole, without feeling that he was no common man, even if his form were not of the Apollo build.

The thoughtful face, however, wore, upon the morning we speak of, a graver look than was its wont. Something was busy beneath those white eyelids, beside the care for the brig. The fog lifted and cleared away—but not so did the captain's face. That was still half clouded, as if there was some memory that disturbed, or some anticipation that knocked unpleasantly at the door of his mind.

"You are grave to-day, Arthur," said his cousin, Stephen Millwood, who had come on board to bid him farewell. "Are you ill? or has the parting from Lella proved too much for you?"

"Don't jest with me to-day, Steve; I cannot bear it. I have unpleasant thoughts which I cannot conquer. I will make a clean breast of it to you; for a trouble shared is half cured, they say. And yet, it is foolish to disturb myself with an idle dream, or to repeat it to you either."

"Say on, my dear fellow. Perhaps I can comfort you, somehow."

"Listen, then. You know Edgerton, who sailed a fortnight since. He was my particular friend. We have been in port together often, and were constant companions. We were hoping to meet again, as I was to sail so soon after him. But last night and the two preceding nights, I was tormented by ugly dreams about Edgerton, which have left an impression on my mind that I cannot rid myself of. There were

strange confused scenes, in which his was the prominent figure. Strife, and bloodshed, and death were all there; and in each, Edgarton had his part. I know not what it betokens, but I feel that wherever he is, he is not safe. I would give worlds to be assured that nothing evil had befallen him; but the presentiment is strong, and will not be controlled."

"But it was only a dream, my dear fellow, and, like a thousand others, has no foundation for alarm. You will laugh over this with Edgarton, when you arrive in port and find him there, unharmed, before you."

"Pray God I may, Steve! If your prediction proves true, I will never trust to dreams again. I never thought myself superstitious, but this has really almost unmanned me. I dwell upon it constantly. Even through the foggy atmosphere of this morning, I have had glimpses of horror that made me shudder; and in every one of them, I have seen Edgarton's face."

"But see, Arthur, the fog has cleared away, and even so will the mists that have temporarily obscured your mind. Promise me that you will try to exorcise your demon, and fill his place with some more agreeable object—*Mademoiselle Leila*, or any other that pleases you."

St. Maur tried to catch a ray of consolation from Stephen Millwood's sunny temper, but in vain. On board Captain's Edgarton's bark, the jaunty little *Arabella*, named after Edgarton's wife, St. Maur had noticed, on the very morning of sailing, a countenance which had sent a thrill of mingled disgust and horror to his impressible nerves. He had even spoken to Captain Edgarton, calling his attention to the almost demoniac face; but had failed in obtaining any other answer than the laughing one of, "O, Priest is no beauty, I know; but he is not a bad fellow, I think. At any rate, he will not show me the wrong side of his temper but once. I am not such a tender-hearted chicken as you, St. Maur, and I should make nothing of stringing him as high as Haman, if I discovered any attempt to molest any one on board."

Hence were engendered the distressing visions that had so tormented St. Maur in regard to his friend; and, after dreaming of the bark of Edgarton and the ugly-looking sailor, for three successive nights, St. Maur had become almost a victim to the

embittered thoughts which, until now, he had kept in his own breast.

St. Maur sailed on that day, notwithstanding his convictions that a storm was at hand; and the consequence was, that the brig was driven back again. A storm, such as seldom arises in the balmy month of May, came on, and the only safety lay in returning. There was a tempest—a dark rainy sea, dense gloomy clouds overhead, and the *Ariadne* came back.

Again all a sailor's superstition seized Captain St. Maur. It was an unlucky voyage that did not keep on its unbroken route. If St. Maur did not rouse himself to soar above this weakness, let us remember that greater men than he have also proved themselves weaker than he.

But on the last day of May the brig sailed anew. The sky was propitious, its blue dome reflected in the sea below. The winds were fair, and the *Ariadne* danced upon the waves, amidst the glitter and glow of their shining surface. The eyes that watched her until she disappeared from sight, were those of maiden, mother, wife. The lips that had kissed the beloved at parting sent up prayers to Heaven for their safe return. They were gone—but every wave that rolled upon the shore would bring back their memories—every storm would wake new fear and dread in loving hearts for the dwellers on the sea.

It was near the sunset hour of the fourth day of Captain St. Maur's outward passage, that the man at the lookout called his attention to a bark, the wavering and unsteady course of which had awakened his curiosity for some minutes. Sometimes approaching, sometimes putting about, as if to sail away altogether, she attracted the eyes of all on board. The captain raised his glass to his eye, but dropped it almost instantly.

"My God!" he exclaimed, "it is Edgarton's bark!"

At the same moment, two or three voices repeated the name of the bark. One man had made two voyages with Captain Edgarton, and declared that it was the *Arabella*; and Clarkson, the mate, was equally sure.

The bark was now making signals of distress. St. Maur ordered the men to stand out for her, and, when near enough, to hail her. They did so, and the brave captain, who was never known to show signs of fear, actually stumbled, and was near fainting

when the answer came to his ear: "Captain Edgarton has been murdered! What brig is that?"

The mate caught up the speaking-trumpet which his captain had dropped, and answered:

"The *Ariadne*—St. Maur master."

A joyful cry was the response.

"For God's sake, come on board the bark!"

Stunned and shocked as he was, St. Maur managed to leap into the boat and gain the deck of the *Arabella*. What a sight met his eye! There lay his friend, the life-blood poured out like water on the deck; and around the body stood several of the crew, with faces blanched to the hue of death. It was horrible, indeed.

"Who has done this frightful deed?" he asked, in a voice that strove to be firm, but trembled with emotion which could not be controlled.

The men pointed to two of the crew who were lashed to one of the masts, and were heavily ironed. One of these men was a negro. He was weeping violently, and shuddered whenever the scene on deck met his eye.

In the dim twilight that soon came on, it was fearful enough, indeed, for any beholder. What must it be for one who had committed the deed, and was compelled to look upon the terrible evidences of his crime?

St. Maur felt himself nearly unmanned. He had known and loved Captain Edgarton like a brother. And now to find him thus—O how could he bear up against it? Never had he felt so completely overcome with grief and indignation. But he felt called upon to make an effort, and he tried to be brave, and to look this dreadful matter in the face.

The mate, who had received several heavy blows in defence of his captain, and who was suffering greatly in consequence, called him aside, to confer with him privately.

He informed him that he did not feel secure as to the character of another whom they had on board. This man, with the white man now lashed to the mast, was taken from a wreck a week before. They had also saved from the wreck a lady, who he hoped was in ignorance of the dreadful affair on deck. She was in the cabin, and he trusted she was sleeping, and would not

come on deck until all vestige of the deed was removed.

"And do, for Heaven's sake, Captain St. Maur, transfer the lady to your brig; for there is everything here to terrify her imagination, and I am too weak to offer her such protection as she needs."

St. Maur promised to convey her to the brig as soon as the darkness should hide the deck from her sight; also to put on board the bark two strong able men, capable of standing by him, in case of further mutiny. He decided to send the bark to the port from which she had sailed, in order that the prisoners might be secured in jail at once.

The mate, or rather, captain, as he now was, agreed with him as to the necessity of so doing.

"But I frankly confess to you," he said, "that in my present state, I dread to encounter the passage home, with such desperate men on board; and yet, I fear you will be seriously inconvenienced by losing two men from your crew, and I feel that I ought not to take them from you."

"No," answered St. Maur. "My brig is only on a cruise, and we shall soon be in a port where I can supply their places. Do not distress yourself on that account."

"Thank you, sir; and thank you, too, for taking the lady. I should have suffered on her account, more than I can express. But let me introduce you to her. She must be awake now."

They descended to the cabin. The lady was awake, and was about to ascend to the deck. She started at sight of the mate's bruised head, but he hastened to assure her that it was nothing serious. He then told her, gently, that the captain was dead, and that Captain St. Maur's vessel being better adapted for passengers, he had thought it would be pleasanter for her to take passage with him.

She was shocked at his news, but pressed herself willing to do what her preservers thought best. He then introduced St. Maur, who asked her if she would go on board immediately.

"When I have taken my last look at Captain Edgarton, I shall be ready," was her answer.

"I entreat you not to think of it," said St. Maur. "The men are making preparations to enclose the body in spirits, and it will be important that they shall do it

speedily—" He hesitated to say more.

"I am sorry. He was very kind and friendly to me. I regret his death, and wish I could have seen him once more; but I will not detain you long."

"Will you remain here, then, until I call for you?"

"Certainly."

St. Maur left her, and went on deck to superintend the arrangements he had suggested. When all was done, he guided the lady to the deck, from which all traces of the recent tragedy had been hastily removed, and where she took leave of the mate. In a few moments she was on board the brig, and sailing quickly away, where she was unknowing of any greater disaster than the death of one she had known so little while.

Not until she was comfortably situated and supper was over, did St. Maur reveal to her what had happened. Shocked and sorrowful, yet inexpressibly grateful for the kindly care St. Maur had taken to keep her in ignorance until now, and thankful to be still under his protection, she could only express her sense of it by her tears.

St. Maur had watched her from the time she had come on board. While they were in the cabin of the *Arabella*, he was too excited to observe her at all. Now, he was aware that she was a very lovely woman. Her face and figure, her quiet and modest demeanor, the interest which her lonely and unprotected state gave her, all awakened an interest unfelt by him before. The "*Leila*" about whom Stephen Millwood had attempted to jest with him, was a protegee of the mother of St. Maur. There was no attachment between them that could possibly conflict with his marriage to another, if he should find a person suited to his fastidious taste.

As yet, the name and circumstances of his passenger were wrapped in mystery; but this did not prevent St. Maur from admiring her as he had never admired woman until he saw her.

Before the evening was over, she had regained her composure sufficiently to explain her situation. Her name was Olive Rochester, the daughter of a West Indian, a merchant, who had recently died. Her mother had died long before, and Olive had been under the care of a governess. Mr. Rochester had made it his dying command that Olive and the governess should

go to the United States, where her mother was born, and where he supposed some of her friends were still living. They had embarked from Porto Rico in a vessel bound to Baltimore; had encountered heavy gales, and were taken from the wreck by the *Arabella*. Only one man was saved. The poor governess, whom she could not mention without tears, was too ill and frightened to bear up under the hardship she was undergoing, and had died the night before. Miss Rochester was more courageous than her friend; but when she saw her committed to the waters, she, too, lost all presence of mind, and gave herself up for lost, until the welcome sails of the *Arabella* caught her eye. Worn out by suffering, she had slept away most of the time after she was rescued, and even the unusual noises on board the bark, on that fatal afternoon, had failed to arouse her benumbed senses.

"And, strangely enough, Miss Rochester," said St. Maur, "I am bound for the port from which you sailed. Do you wish to see home so soon?"

"O, I do indeed! It will seem so much better than to go among strangers, in the worn and listless state I am now in. Though I shall sadly miss my poor friend when I get there. She had been my companion from childhood, and was the only mother I ever knew."

"But will you not carry out your father's wish in visiting the United States?"

"Perhaps I may; but it will be some time before I shall have courage to try the ocean again. Then my home is very dear to me, desolate as it is. I should never have left it, had I been left to my own free will. And I think I must wait now until I ascertain if I have any relatives in Baltimore, who care to see me. Besides, no one can take the place of my poor Juanita, in accompanying me on a voyage."

Every day spent by St. Maur in the society of this charming girl deepened the interest he had taken in her. He was too thoroughly honorable, however, to acquaint her with any sentiments he cherished toward her, save those of the greatest kindness and friendliness. She felt the delicacy and nobleness of his conduct toward her, and showed her sense of it by trying to appear cheerful and even happy.

St. Maur had supplied himself with read-

ing matter of the best and most refined sort; and this was a source of untiring interest to both. Both, too, were skillful chess-players, and this, too, helped to wile away the time. Each had inward griefs; but they strove to hide the pain that they inflicted.

And so the voyage wore on, until the destined port came in sight. Then came the thought that all this companionship might be ended forever. To St. Maur this idea was inexpressibly sad. He knew not if Olive Rochester would care if she should never see his face again. His stay must necessarily be short; and if he would know his fate, it must be important that he should tell the story of his love for her as soon as she should reach her home.

To one as reticent as himself, it was no easy task to broach a subject upon which he was so wholly in the dark, as that of Miss Rochester's feeling in regard to himself. By no chance show of affection had she ever intimated that she felt for him anything save the calm courtesy and serene trust in his honor which all *must* feel toward a man like St. Maur. At all times and from all people, he received this *courtesy* and this trust.

It was only when he parted from her at her own door that she showed emotion, and the sight of it sent a thrill to his heart. He never forgot her look, nor the clasp of her hand at that parting.

When the *Ariadne* sailed from Porto Rico, Olive Rochester was the promised bride of St. Maur. In her beautiful home, six months afterwards, she became his wife. If we fail to give more than this passing record, it is because the wooing was so calm and serene—so free from passionate emotion, that it needs no burning and fervid words to depict it. And in the tranquil years that have passed since the meeting of those two souls, St. Maur has grown into the realization of all his hopes of happiness, and can truly say, "How much the wife is dearer than the bride."

The murderers of Captain Edgerton met with their punishment, when the bark arrived home. The negro affirmed to the last that the white man was the instigator of the crime, and compelled him, by dreadful threats, to perform his bidding. God alone knows!